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introduction

This little book is a synopsis of my Marathi book—An Outline of Folklore (Loksāhityacī Rūprekhā) which was published in 1956 by the Mumbai Marathi Grantha — Sangrahalaya. It was the outcome of my investigations of some important aspects of Indian folklore, according to modern methods in folklore studies. Hence, the first chapter is based on the survey of different schools and ideologies in folklore studies in the West. India has a long tradition of civilization which has imbibed different ancient cultures. Hence an analysis of the evolution of various strata of folklore, such as tales, songs, riddles etc. became inevitable. Because the roots of the Indian civilization are embedded in antiquity, and as civilization itself is a confluence of many advanced and primitive cultures, local traditions from the provinces have been carefully examined both for their alliance with, as well as contrast to Vedic culture. All the cultural material, so far as I was able to get, when studied in this light, the natural conclusion I arrived at was this : Indian culture, as represented in folklore, has been of one and the same quality, texture and strength, since the Vedic times. It has one soul. It is indivisible. The passage of time has not changed its form. Different religious doctrines have not affected its unchangeable spirit and even the outer garb. The provincial customs and linguistic peculiarities also have little affected it. For thousands of years India was culturally united. The cultural harmony in India, despite differences in provincial traditions, is unique. Unity in spite of diversity is what the divergence of traditions in folklore points to. Whether you study a proverb, or a myth, or a riddle, or a song, you almost certainly find its prototype either in Vedic, Buddhist-Jain liter-

local legends (2) customs and traditions i.e. local traditions, festivals, rituals, traditional games, etc. (3) superstitions i.e. witchcraft, fortune-telling, popular assumption, customs, popular sayings, proverbs, popular nomenclature, riddles, nonsense rhymes, etc.

With this scientific definition and scope of folklore, the difference between the myth and the folk-legend also became distinct. This also facilitated the study of individual items of folklore with better results.

IV

Close contact with Popular Life

1. *The Anthropological School* : Study of anthropology established a permanent and itimate relationship between the actual life of people and folkloristics. (a) *Andrew Lang* : The first prominent figure in the anthropological school. Opponent of Max Müller and of the philological school. His exposition of the mythopoeic condition is valuable for understanding the common factors in myths of different countries and people.

2. The survival theory was another important contribution of Tylor, the anthropologist. The theory was upheld by Lang and applied to folklore. The theory assumes that the tales of the civilized people are the survivals of those of the primitive. This theory also came to be criticized and modified later by other scholars.

3. *The Distributionist School* : This school established that there is an archetype of tale that serves as the basic of tales that are distributed all over the world. This study is made by means of the historical geographical method. This method was first employed by Finnish scholars like Krohn and Aarne and now upheld by modern American scholars like Thompson.

3. *Diffusionist School* : This school assumes one spot as the centre or origin of a tale and from that point the diffusion of the tale is recorded and studied.

4. *The Historical Geographical School* : The propounder of the School is A. Krohn. His study of the motifs of the Finnish ballads

and similar motifs from other lands made him adopt the historical geographical method. This method gave a very prominent place to motifs in the study of folklore. Its importance is daily increasing. His work "Tale Types" is a renowned book. (In my book I have adopted the same historical geographical method, as I believe that in a country like India with a many-layered and long past and a vast expanse with a variety of languages and customs, folklore could be analysed only by such a method.)

5. *The American Anthropological School* : A sketch of the contribution of Franz Boas. His theory of Polygenesis of tales.

6. *The Psychological Schools* : Founded by Freud. Oedipus complex. This school flourished for some years and influenced the study of folklore for some time but now it has fewer adherents.

7. *The Functional School* : This school propounds the independent origin of tales as it believes in the spontaneity and independent origin of cultures. Similar cultures are capable of being independent of one another ; similar social and natural conditions give rise to similar customs and thoughts. The propounder of this school is the anthropologist Dr. Malinowski.

2

an introductin to the indian tradition.

Introduction : The chapter deals with the attitude of the Indians towards stories and songs, their efforts for the preservation of that lore, their study of it and the various technical names they gave to tales and songs. The chief aim of the chapter is to visualise the treatment of various schools of stories and songs.

The Attitude: India is a land which is known for its love of stories. From the very remote times Indians have looked upon stories and songs as sacred. They look upon tales and songs as special divinities. In the Vedic literature, Saraswatī is the Goddess of speech. The metres are divinities. Every kind of beautiful speech, pregnant with the emotions and experiences of mankind, gifted with vision, was looked upon as sacred by Indians. Gāyatrī is made the female eagle who brought the water of life for the gods; she in the Padma-purāṇa is represented as a milkmaid and married to the god Brahman. Such personification of the tale-spirit or the song-spirit is found in common folk-tales also. Five tales, when a prince refuses to hear them are said to get angry and punish him. Other four tales also hid themselves in the four corners of the house to punish the hero. Telling a story is looked upon as a meritorious act. The narration even of a secular tale is said to have cured disease.

Speciality of Indian story-literature : While studying folklore, one cannot neglect the ancient tales, songs, riddles, etc., which are found in the ancient literature of India. The continuity of the heterogeneous Indian cultural tradition indeed makes such a study IMPERATIVE. Not only Indian folklore, but folklore from any other part of the world demands a thorough knowledge of the ancient

Indian story material. The reason is obvious. The Indian literary story-tradition is the oldest in the world and Vedic literature represents it. The Indian epics, the Jātakas, Kathāsaritsāgara, the Curṇis are all very important sources of the world-folklore, much more important than the Greek tales. The traditional story material comprises :—(1) The myths and moral tales as found in the epics, Pali Tipiṭakas, Jain Curṇis, Purāṇas etc. (2) Independent collection of tales such as the Jātakas, Kathākośa, Pancatantra, Kathāsaritsāgara, Simhāsandvātrimśati, Hitopadeśa, Vetāla tales etc. (3) Fairy tales which are presented through the literary medium such as, the Daśa-Kumāracarita of Daṇḍin, Subandhu's Vasavadattā, Bāṇa's Kādambarī etc. The period from the Ṛgveda to Bāṇa covers over four thousand years. In order to analyse the technical terms about tales, songs, etc. in the ancient Indian literature, some divisions, set in a chronological sequence have to be made. They are :

(1) *The Vedic Division* : The Vedic division consists of the Samhitās, Brāhmaṇas, and the Upaniṣads which represent the religious school.

(2) *The Bṛhaddevatā and Anukramaṇi Division* : This division is supplementary to the former and represents the mythological school.

(3) *The Nirukta Division* : The Nirukta or the etymological division, which is important for an understanding of Ṛgvedic culture; It represents the etymological school.

(4) *The Epic and Puranic Division* : This division covers the Mahabhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, and the Purāṇas. It represents the Sūta tradition or the bardic school.

(5) *The Pāṇini Division* : This division covers the works of Pāṅini and Patanjali and represents the grammarian school.

(6) *The Buddhist and Jain Division* : This division represents the non-vedic traditions.

(7) *The Bṛhatkathā Division* : This division imbibes the Kathāsaritsāgaṛa and traditional story-collections that have sprung from it. This division belongs to the Vedic (or Brahmanic) tradition. It represents the popular story school.

(8) *The Sanskrit and Prakrit Classical Literature Division* : This division along with the works in classical literature comprises the works on rhetorics also.

(10) *The Dharmaśāstra Division* : This division represents the Dharmaśāstra school and comprises the Dharmasūtras and Smṛtis.

The Vedic Division:

In the Samhitās, only two words Sūkta and Gāthā are used to mean the hymn and the songs. In the Brāhmaṇas however, the words like Ākhyāna, Purāṇa, Itihāsa, Arthavāda are found which indicate the story material.

Sūkta

The Sūkta is the complete utterance of a sage which invokes the gods. The Sūkta is thus the sacred hymn confined only to the Samhitās.

Gāthā

The word Gāthā, which means a song or a ballad, is of pre-Vedic origin and very significant in Avestan literature as well. In India the word is used even today. The Gāthās are said to be divine as well as human. In the Brāhmaṇa literature the divine Gāthās are the secred songs, while the human ones are secular. They are also called the Narāsamsī viz. the praise songs of man. This is evidently the earliest reference to Indian ballad poetry, where the heroic deeds and the philanthropic actions of eminent men were described. Gāthās are found in Pali and Jain literature and also in Prakrit poetry.

Kathā

The most common word in Sanskrit for the story is Kathā. We do not find the word in Vedic literature.

Arthavāda

The Arthavāda is the name for the tale which explains a ritual.

Itihasa-Purāṇā

The words Itihāsa and Purāṇa are used as synonyms in Vedic literature and till the fifth century A.D. they continued to be so. They signified a tale which belonged to the past.

The Nirukta Division : Yāska, the author of the Nirukta, has probably used the word Itihāsa as a part of the Mantra literature. The etymologist distinguisehd themselves from the Aitihāsikas or historians. Another words which signifies a tale is Nidāna and closely connected with Itihāsa.

The Bṛhaddevatā Division : Śaunaka representing the mythological school, gives three designations of the Mantras viz. Acikhyāsā, Saṃlāpa and Pavitrākhyana. Ācikhyāsā is narration. Samlāpa is the dialogue and Pavitrākhyana is the sacred tale. Śaunaka gives illustrations from the Ṛgveda to explain these three types.

The Sūta Tradition : The Sūta tradition is different from the Mantra tradition and is yet as old. The Sūtas come from the charioteers class and were non-Brāhmins, Sūtas like Ugraśravas and Lomaharṣaṇa are mentioned in the Mahābhārata but we obtain no more information about these or any other bards. It is probable that the original literature of these bards was in the old Prakrits and then transferred to Sanskrit.

The Grammarian School : The words Ākhyāyikā, Ākhyāna, Itihāsa and Purāṇa were known to the early grammarians as we see from Vārtika of Pāṇini.

The Ākhyānas are said to be the stories of Yavakrīta, Priyaṅgu, Yayātiā and the Ākhyayikās of Vāsavadattā, and Sumanottarā by Patanjali. But he does not differentiate them technically.

A characteristic of the grammarians is that their knowledge of traditional tales and songs was perfect. The world-famous collections of tales were first made by them. The efforts of Vararuci and Gunāḍhya can hardly be overestimated. The later Jain Ācārya Hemacandra also was both a grammarian and compiler of stories.

The Buddhist and the Jain Division : The chronological importance of the Buddhist and Jain records is uncommon in the Indian tradition. From that period onwards we get a definite idea of the dates of many works and their authors. The date of the death

of Gautama Buddha is 480 B.C. Mahāvīra was his junior contemporary. The Tipiṭakas were consolidated within 150 years after the death of the Buddha. The Jātakas are a portion of the Khuddaka Nikāya. But the original Jātakas are not found today preserved in their original form. The Jātakas that are available to us are supposed to be preserved by Buddhaghosa in Ceylon.

Just as the Buddha used the Jātakas to propagate his religion, so did Mahāvīra resort to many moral tales. Both the prophets used the traditional moral tales for this purpose and used dialects as their medium, and not Sanskrit. The literary meaning of the word Jātaka is a tale belonging to the former birth of the Buddha. The Jain tales are called Cūrṇi, Cūrṇa, Cūrṇaka, Avacūrṇa and Avacūrṇi. All these are synonyms. The etymology of the word Cūrṇa is that which is ground into flour, is but far from satisfactory. Avacūrṇa, means summary. As the Jātaka represents the Buddhist tale, so does the Cūrṇa represent the Jain tale.

Both the Jātaka and Cūrṇas are collections of moral tales. The oldest fables or moral tales are found in the Mahābhārata. Then come these tales. The Buddhist animal-tales have an international reputation. The stock of animal-tales, fables and moral tales of the Buddhists and Jains is much larger than those in the epics. The moral tales in Vedic literature are smaller in number ; even the tales in the epics form a small collection. It can be said to the credit of the Buddhists and Jains that they employed short story of every kind to propagate their doctrines even more than the Brahmins and Kshtriyas belonging to the Vedic tradition.

The Dṛṣṭānta or allegory in the form of the tales was used more skilfully by the early Jains in their literature than the compilers of the epics.

In the commentary of the Jātakas by Buddhaghosa we find an excellent word for the moral tale viz. Guṇakathā, which I think is worth being made current in the present Indian terminology. The chief difference between the Vedic and the Buddhist-Jain tales is that the former are bereft of the animal-tales, while the latter abound in it. The Vedic tales and the epics following them, however, give the most gorgeous of the nature-myths which the Buddhist and the Jain literatures lack. The Vedic (and the Hindu) religion is essentially a naturalistic religion; every power of Nature found its way into

the Hindu pantheon. Buddhism and Jainism are prophetic religions in which the deification of natural phenomena has no place. Hence a divinity like Indra which played an important role in the Vedic myths, though retained in some of the Buddhist and Jain tales as the king of heaven, is represented as a very weak personality, inferior to the Buddhas and Jinas. The Buddhists and Jains have thus no creation-tales.

The word Dharmakathā occurs many a time in the Buddhist and Jain records. Yet it means no more than a moral tale.

Bṛhatkathā : The role of Bṛhatkathā in the expansion of the tales claimed by the Vedic religionist is important. About the technical representation of the tale,—Bṛhatkathā provides us with some points which are worthy of consideration.

They are (1) the medium of the tales was Paiśacī. Dr. S. V. Kethar, in Pracina Maharasthtra, says that from the Kuru-war to the time of Vararuci the native languages had to limit their sphere of action to a great extent. They had two rivals viz., Sanskrit in the field of religion and Paiśācī in the field of politics. Because of its political importance all the worthwhile portions of it were taken up by the cultural languages. Ancient tales were first in Prakrit. From Prakrit they were transmitted to Paiśacī and from Paiśācī to Sanskrit. The period of Bṛhatkathā, according to Dr. Kethar, is 700 B.C. Paiśacī, according to many scholars, was the language of the people round about Peshavar. If we peep into the dramas, we find, however, that it was the language of the lowest castes. Amarānanda Yogin in Alankāra-Sarvasva supports this view. (2) Bṛhatkathā is the first treatise that frees the tale from religious bondage. The Vedic people and especially the Buddhists and Jains all made the tale subservient to the religious doctrine. Bṛhtkathā presents the tale in its purest form. The secular tale stood on its own legs for the first time and found a voice too. The wonder-element is the chief motivation of the tales in this compendium. The word Itihāsa, which had been accepted by the ancients to mean the story, has been thrown overboard here. The work has been described as a great tale full of fantasy. Three new words Adbhuta-kathā (the wonder-tale, or fairy-tale), Mahākathā, (great-tale) and Bṛhatkathā (a tale comprising a series of tales) are found in this work. The original Bṛhatkathā in the Paiśācī is lost. Abridged versions of parts are

found in Sanskrit, viz., Kathāsaritsāgara of Somadeva and Bṛhatkathāmanjarī of Kśemendra. Bṛhatkathā thus brought out a revolution in the story-world. The story henceforward could be justified to be a story only. It need no longer by yoked to religious dogma, and be shut up for the multitude of listeners who did not belong to the particular sect. The tale henceforward was meant for the amusement of the listener and not burdened with the task of moral instruction. It could also develop on its own line. No character, no situation, no doctrine could be suppressed. As a matter of fact Bṛhatkathā laid down an ideal base for the development of fiction.

(3) Guṇāḍhya set out to prove that the collections of tales, full of romance and fantasy, could have the same status as the Mahābharāta. To collect folk-tales and give them a literary form was a work worthy of a poet like Vyāsa. He wished to be called a Mahākavi, a great poet. The epics became popular because of the gods and goddesses, reputed royal geneologies, honoured sages, top ranking ideologies, etc. Guṇādhya had to dispense with most of these things and yet make his tales attractive to the people. To throw overboard the religious moorings was dangerous. Some compromise was necessary. Guṇāḍhya therefore, invented the Śiva-Pārvatī episode in the beginning which has really nothing to do with the contents. Guṇāḍhya cherished the Vedic tradition; he criticized the Buddhist monks severely. Yet he did not overdo his praise of the Vedic religious systems. Śiva was a deity which stood essentially by the people. Indian folklore makes use of the Śiva-Pārvatī-motif, to show that the divine pair gives a timely help to the distressed hero or heroine. Before the Mahābhārata and even in the Jātakas, Indra used to do this job. But in the latter portions of the Mahābhārata Indra vanished and Śiva took his place in popular Hindu fiction.

(4) *The Frame-story* : The peculiarity of the Sūta-tradition is the frame-story. Mahābhārata is a good example of it. The same technique Bṛhatkathā has used in a masterly way. Jain books like Parśvanātha-carita follow the same technique. The Jātakas however seem to be free from it. Guṇāḍhya adopted the same technique, perhaps because he wanted the same applause of the public as Vyāsa had. Yet his stories, being purely secular, never

got the recognition desired by him. The literary critics also ignored his work, as perhaps they thought it a narration of traditional tales and had not conformed to the literary form of classical literature. Bṛhatkathā's contribution to the Indian story is undeniable. In it the story got its form and dignity. Not only that, but it gave the oriental tale a special dignity and technique. All other collections of stories pale before it.

The Bṛhatkathā had, however, an effect on later compilations. Hemacandra, in his Pariśiṣṭa-parvan, mentions two words, Kalpita-kathā (fictitious tale) and Kūṭā-kathānaka (the riddle-story) which are not found previously.

The word Kathā-prahelikā (riddle-story) also comes to be applied to the famous Vetāl stories by Jambhaladatta in the 16th century.

The Literary Scientists' Division : The scholars of the science of literature both in Sanskrit and Prakrit have made valuable contributions to poetics, rhetorics, aesthetics, etc. Yet the story as a form of literature has not been handled at all. The word Itihāsa was dropped by the Buddhists as a synonym for the story, and so the literary scientists can be excused if they dropped the old word too, as it meant no story, but history. But the words, like the Ākhyāna also are defined nowhere. The only two words the scholars have discussed are Ākhyāyikā. and Kathā.

Daṇḍin's Opinion :

Daṇḍin while defining Ākhyayikā says that it is traditionally looked upon as an autobiographical narration ; while the Kathā can be any narrative. Though the Ākhyāyikā is entirely prose, still there are some verses strewn in between. The same is the case with the Kathā and so there is no difference between the two.

Visvanatha's Opinion :

The body of the Kathā is filled with prose, though here and there a verse in the Āryā metre is found. The best example of the Kathā is the Kādambarī of Bāṇa (Daṇḍin and his predecessors give it as an example of Ākhyāyikā). Some portions describing the poet and

his family life etc. occur in verse and the story (like a novel) is divided into sections, such as the Harṣacarita of Bāṇa.

Agnipurāṇa :

The Agnipurāṇa gives five kinds of the prose-poetry (Gadya-kāvya), viz. Ākhyayikā, Kathā, Khaṇḍakathā, Parikathā and Kathānikā.

Akhyāyikā :

The Ākhyāyikā is a story divided into sections and sub-sections. In the beginning the author and his family are praised in prose. The story tells of the carrying of the heroine, the union and separation of lovers etc. The Ākhyāyika is autobiographical.

Kathā :

In this the poet eulogises his own family-line and for the expression of the central theme, another narrative becomes necessary. There is no division, and if division is unavoidable, only sub-division like the Lambaka is resorted to. Such a story narrated in verse is the Kathā.

Khaṇḍakathā and Parikathā :

The common characteristic of both these types of stories is that the hero is not born of the royal family. He is either a minister or a merchant or a Brahmin. These stories have a tragic trend. The hero has to face dangers and sorrows all the time. The Khaṇḍa-kathā follows the Kathā in its technique. The Parikathā is influenced both by the Ākhyāyikā and the Kathā and because of its mixed character it is called the Parikathā or the round about tale.

V. S. Apte, in his Sanskrit-English Dictionary has mistaken Parikathā for the fairy-tale.

Kathānika :

The contents of the Kathānikā are tragic. The terrible also has its play in it. Yet the end is happy. The Kathānikā is never idealistic

and its end is based on fantasy or wonder or the improbable. In order to make a sad story suddenly end happily, there is either a fairy or the divine revelation. The use of the super-human element is inevitable in this technique. This is nearer to the fairy tale than any other type.

Cūrṇa :

Because the Jain literary critics and commentators had a high place in literature, the Cūrṇa did not become only a relic of the older story-material like the Jātakas. It was taken note of by the rhetorecians. Vāmana in the Kavyālankārasūtra says that Cūrṇa is prose and full of compound words. It is difficult to understand. The prose in the Cūrṇa, however, has the flavour of verse.

In the Uttarādhyayana Sūtra of the Jains, women are said to sing songs while pounding. Such songs are plaintive and sweet.

Vararuci is said to have collected songs of women, and having improved upon them, he used to sing them. These songs are called Loiakavva in the Prakrit Avacurni. Loiakavva means popular song.

This is the oldest word for the folk-song we have. In old Tamil literature also there is a reference to the songs of aboriginal women. These songs were so sweet and attractive that when the beasts of prey heard them, they became as tame as lambs.

The word Prāsangika-Kathā is found in the Alankārasangrahā ; it is applied to the plot in a drama and the story belongs to a remote past and to a remote country.

Saneāpa is a story made mostly of dialogues. The Alankāra-sangraha calls it a kind of popular drama. It belongs to the class of Goṣṭhï, Bhāṇa and Rāsaka.

The Brhathalpa-sūtra-bhāṣya of the Jains gives some information about the Ākhyāyikā, the Ākhyāna and the Kathā. The Ākhyā-yikās are like the words Tarangavatī, Malayavatī etc. Ākhyānakas are like those of Dhūrtākhyāna. The Kathā is like Vasudeva-carita or Ceṭaka-kathā. Trisamuttha-kathā is the miscellaneous type of tale (or tales) which explains Dharma, Artha, and Kāma.

Rājaśekhara, a poet and scholar of poetics (880-930), is the first to define the folksong. This is the earliest and yet scientifically a very correct definition of the folk-song. The modern definition has

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Rājaśekhara, a poet and scholar of poetics (880-930), is the first to define the folksong. This is the earliest and yet scientifically a very correct definition of the folk-song. The modern definition has

not gone further yet. He says that the songs of the children, women belonging to the lower strata of society, are transmitted by an oral tradition. Yet if such songs are sweet they should be gladly accepted.

The opinion of the Dharmaśāstrakāras : In the Gautama-dharma-sūtra (B.C.500), there is a reference to the Bhavisya-Purāṇa. Āpostamba Dharmasūtra mentions Itihāsa-Puraṇa. The commentators of Manusmṛti, like Nārāyana, Govindarāja, Rāghavānanda and Kullūka say that Ākhyāna is different from Itihāsa. Medhātithi and Govindrāja call the Sauparṇa and Maitravaruṇa, Ākhyānas.

Nandana says that the Kansa-vadha is an Ākhyāna.

Of the many words given above the words Kathā and Kahāni (Kathānikā) are found in modern Indian languages. In Marathi, however, Kathā and Kahāṇi mean a religious tale. The ordinary tale is called Goṣṭa—The word Gāhā is preserved in U.P. and applied to a special type of work-songs. The Mundas use the word Kahāni for any tale, but Durang Kahāni is generally a tale both in verse and prose at the same time.

It is surprising that though the compilers of tales were geniuses like Vyāsa, Vālmiki, Vararuci, Guṇāḍhya etc., in India, the tale as a type did not get a historian or literary critic like Aristotle to explain its purpose and importance.

3

the custodians of popular literature

This chapter is supplementary to the last ane. It deals with some of the most important compilers of traditional tales.

Mahīdāsa Aitareya :

The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa gives a number of important tales; its compiler was Mahīdāsa Aitareya. Compared to the tales in the Kauśītakī Brahmana, these tales excel in the art of narration, though they are meant to explain the ritual, they are not suppressed; sometime they come as independent pieces and the ritual is nominally appended to them.

Mahīdāsa was the son of Itarā, a very common woman. His father did not like him. He treated the sons of other high born wives lovingly, and always insulted Mahīdāsa. This made the boy unhappy. Because her son should have the same status and rights as the other boys, Itarā asked Mahīdāsa to pray to Mother Earth. He did so and the goddess gave him knowledge and he became a renowned sage. He then compiled the Somayāga rituals and explained them with various legends.

The other sages, compilers of the Brāhmaṇas who knew tales were Kauṣitakī, Paingya, Jaimini etc.

Mārkaṇḍeya :

Among the compilers of the Purāṇas the place of Mārkaṇḍeya is unique. He was the pupil of Indrapramati, the pupil of Vyāsa. He is the compiler of the Mārkaṇḍeya smrti, Mārkaṇḍeya-stotra, Mārkaṇḍeya purāna and Verāha-purāṇa. He had a short life, but because of the blessings of the seven sages he became immortal.

ature, or in the epics and the Purāṇas. Though, we are yet unable to find an exact duplicate of any and every piece of folklore, we surely find the seed in some of the above-mentioned sources. By these variants we are able to trace the evolution of the various forms of folklore. This makes the study of Indian folklore quite distinct from that of any other country of the world. Frazer propounded in the Golden Bough the theory, that for proper understanding of European popular tradition, the study of the ancient Greek, Crete and Teutonic cultures was inevitable. Many other scholars have shown how Egyptian and Babylonic cultures affected the Mediterranean culture. All these efforts are valuable and stupendous. They are inspiring also. Yet, the field of research in Indian folklore is vaster still. It is much deeper and extremely complex. In Europe, the Greek, Celtic and Teutonic religious traditions were entirely wiped out. Christianity spread all over Europe, and hence folklore remains only as a relic of the bygone traditions. With the exception of Turkey. Christianity became the state religion everywhere. The question of diverse religious opinions was far less acute there than in India. Indian culture had in ancient times influenced the whole of Asia by Buddhism and the Rāmāyaṇa. The Vedic religion is as alive today as it was centuries and centuries ago. The non-Vedic traditions are also alert. The Śaiva traditions, the Jaina traditions are also active. Hundreds of religious sects exist in villages. Dravidian traditions are perennially going on. The processes of friction and assimilation between the multitudes of sects and schools are ever at work. The traditions of Islam and Christianity were added to these, as also the Bene-Israel traditions. The aborigines have their own traditions as well. Such being the reality, folklore in India is not a mere relic. It is an important section of the multi-coloured, multi-lingual, multi-traditional Indian culture, which is practically incomprehensible. One cannot get a full view of it. One cannot judge it precisely because it is unimaginably vast.

The Beginning of the Study of Indian Folklore

The study of Indian folklore came into being as a branch of Indology. The studies in comparative philology, comparative religion and mythology and customs that stimulated the interest of the

scholarly world of the West to know Indian culture in all its aspects. Studies in history both ancient and modern, created definite base for cultural studies and especially the antiquities.

William Jones established the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. The journal of the Society was devoted to history, antiquties, arts, science and literature of Asia. In 1804 the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society was established and it started its journal too on similar lines. In 1829 the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland came into existence and in 1845 the Royal Asiatic Society of Ceylon.

The journals of these societies gave some material on folklore which was then classified either as anthropology or antiquities. In the first hundred years of these journals only a score of articles on folklore can be said to be really important.

Indian Antiquary was started in Bombay in 1872 under the editorship of James Burgess. It is in this journal that folklore was treated as a special subject and separated from the antiquities. It gave special attention to myths, folk-tales and popular traditions. The folklores of the Konkan, Gujarat and Bengal were prominently brought out.

The Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay (1886) gave maximum space to folklore. The bulk of its valuable material was contributed by Sarat Chandra Mitra.

The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society, The Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society, Man-in-India also have valuable and vast material on folklore.

The first collection of Indian folk-tales was The Old Deccan Days (1868) by Mary Frere. Then came the Indian Fairy Tales by Miss Stokes. Three more collections came out and then the Wide Awake Stories (1884) — a collection of tales from the Punjab by Flora Steele and Sir Richard Temple.

Crtical Classification of Indian Tales

In his introduction to Mary Frere's book, Sir Bartle Frere has given the social background of the tales ; he also gives an appendix which explains some peculiar customs and manners. Yet, Sir Richard Temple was the first to give a detailed classification of the motifs

His wife's name was Dhumorṇā and son's Vedaśiras. Mārkaṇḍeya was present at the marriage of Rāma and Sītā. It was he who narrated a number of old tales like that of Sāvitrī, Nala and Damayantī etc. to the Pāṇḍavas when they were in exile. From the point of beauty these tales are unique in the Mahābhārata.

Vararuci :

There are two different accounts of Vararuci. The favourable account in the Brahmanic tradition preserved in the Kathāsuritsāgara and the hostile one in Jain literature viz., Triṣaṣtiśalākā-puraṣacarita.

Once Śiva was recounting the story of the seven Vidyādharas to Pārvatī. Nobody else knew the tale and Śiva insisted that none, but his consort should listen to it. So he posted the bull Nandin at the door to prevent anybody's entry into his apartment. Yet one of Śiva's attendants, Puśpadanta, curious to know the story entered the apartment in an invisible form and listened to it. He told the story to his wife Jayā. Jayā retold it to Pārvatī. Pārvatī became angry when she came to know that the story her husband said was not known to anybody else but the divine couple, was already known even to her attendants. She accused Śiva of deceiving her. Then the whole truth of how the story was listened to came out. Pārvatī cursed Puṣpadanta to become a man and stay on the earth. Another attendant Malyavān pleaded forgiveness for his friend. Pārvatī cursed him too with human existence. Pārvatī further decreed that Puṣpadanta should be free from the curse when he would relate the story to the demon Kāṇabhūti, and when Kāṇabhūti would tell the story to Malyavān he too would leave his humân body and be back to his heavenly abode. Puṣpadanta became Vararuci and Malyavān Guṇāḍhya.

Vararuci was born in a poor Brahmin family in Kauśāmbī. He lost his father when a child. His mother supported him by doing menial jobs. Vararuci had a sharp memory. He could learn anything by heart if he heard it but once. One day two Brahmins, Vyāḍī and Indradatta, stayed as guests in Vararuci's house. At night they went to the theatre and took Vararuci along with them. In the morning they were surprised to see the boy repeat the whole drama verbatim to his mother. They tested his memory by reciting difficult grammar

texts, like the Pratiśākhya and the boy repeated those accurately. They had in fact been on the look-out for a boy with this kind of sharp memory. For there was a learned Brahmin Varṣa in Pātalīputra who would impart his knowledge only to the one who would imbibe it at the first hearing. Indradatta could memorise a passage if he heard it twice and Vyāḍi after the third recital. They found Vararuci helpful to their purpose. They took him to Varṣa.

Varṣa imparted to him all the knowledge and arts and demanded one lakh gold coins as his fee. In the meanwhile his niece Upakośā fell in love with Vararuci and married him.

Vararuci passed on the knowledge to Vyāḍī and Indradatta, who promised to help him in getting one lakh of gold coins from the king Nanda. When the three arrived at the palace, the king Nanda had died all of a sudden. Indradatta, then by his power of entering another's body, left his own body and entered that of the king. He thus became the king Yogānanda. Vyāḍī had kept a watch on the body of Indradatta and Vararuci approached the king for a gift of the gold coins. The king gave the money. But the minister Śakatāla suspected a foul game and ordered all the dead bodies in the town to be cremated immediately. So was Indradatta's body cremated and his soul remained caged in the body of the king Nanda. Yogānanda, or the faked Nanda as he was called, gave the money to Vararuci and made him minister. He kept Śākatāla and his sons in imprisonment. Yogānanda later became so arrogant and tyrannical that Vararuci began to hate him and he pitied Śākatāla.

In the meanwhile Vararuci was defeated in a contest by the grammarian Pāṇini. Overcome with shame, he freed Śakatāla, made him a minister again and retired to the Himalayas to please Śiva and to learn grammar from him. After some years his task accomplished, he returned.

The judge, the royal priest and a merchant tried to win the love of his beautiful wife Upakośa who was living alone in the town. She however, turned the scales upon them and got protection from Yogānanda, who had got interested in her.

When Vararuci returned there was a quarrel between him and Yogānanda. The king ordered him to be executed. But Śākatāla hid him and saved his life though he announced that Vararuci was

killed. Having heard the news, Upakośā entered the fire and died, Vararuci's mother also died of shock.

Soon Cāṇakya came into power and killed Yogānanda and all his sons; Chandragupta became king. Vararuci came out of the prison, but he was so overwhelmed with grief that he gave up his family and became an ascetic. While wandering in the forest of the Vindhyas he met the demon Kāṇabhūti. He then remembered his former existence and the story Bṛhatkthā. He told it to the demon and lived peacefully in the Himalayas till the end.

The Jain Version :

When the last king of the Nandas was ruling in Magadha, Śākatāla was a Jain minister. An outside Brahmin, a renowned poet and grammarian Vararuci by name, got entrance to the royal court. He became the court poet. Vararuci collected songs of woman, gave them a new form and sung them. Śākatala charged him with plagiarism.

To prove the charge he made his seven daughters memorise a song at the first, second, third hearing and so on. The king then discontinued his patronage.

Thereupon Vararuci dropped some machine in the waters of the Ganges and underneath it kept a bag of coins. He took out the coins one by one every day and told the people that the goddess of the river gave him the money. People were thus deceived by him. Śākatāla found out his trick and exposed him a second time.

Vararuci contrived to destroy Śākatāla. Śākatāla's son was to be married and the minister had collected a vast store of weapons in order to present them to the various noble guests who would attend the wedding. Vararuci got the news through his spies and he went and told the king that Śākatāla was hatching a plot to dethrone the king and be a king himself. The weapons were evidence of the conspiracy. The king believed it and put the minister to death. His son Śrīyaka, was made minister. Śrīyaka in his own way planned a revenge on Vararuci, he bribed the courtesan Kosá whose lover was Vararuci. She with the minister's instructions made Vararuci drink liquor with force though he never touched it.

Next morning the poet was charged with drinking liquor which

was forbidden to Brahmins and as a punishment he was put to death by pouring hot burning liquor in his throat.

Guṇāḍhya :

In the town of Prātiṣṭhána (mordern Paithan according to some, Pothra in Vidarbha according to Dr. Mirashi) lived a Brahmin called Somaśarman. He had two sons and a daughter, Śrutārthā. Śrutārthā fell in love with the Nāga Kīrtisena, and bore a son, Guṇāḍhya by name. He was brought up by his uncles.

While he was yet a child, his mother and uncles died and he became an orphan. Guṇāḍhya then went to Dakśiṇāpatha to learn and attain proficiency in Sanskrit and other Indian languages. He was very clever in many spheres.

On his return to Pratiṣṭhāna, Guṇāḍhya mixed with all kinds of people in the town. He secured entrance to the royal court and received great honours.

The king Sātavahana did not know Sanskrit and was once ridiculed by his learned queen for his ignorance. This touched the king to the quick. He determined to be proficient in Sanskrit within six months and asked Guṇāḍhya if he could teach him Sanskrit within that much period. Guṇāḍhya said that it would take at least six years for anybody to be well versed in Sanskrit. There was another pundit in the court, called Sarvavarman, who was jealous of Guṇāḍhya. When he saw that Guṇaḍhya was unable to comply with the royal wish, he offered his services to the king and said he would coach the king within six months and make him a master of that language. The king was pleased to her this assurance. Guṇāḍhya said that if it came true, he would give up using Sanskrit, Prakrit and other Deśī languages too.

Sarvavarman knew his task was an impossibility. He went to the temple of the goddess Caṇḍī and declared that if she did not help him to make the king a master of Sanskrit within six months he would cut his own head and die. The goddess went to his rescue.

Guṇāḍhya was crestfallen. Because of his defeat in the wager, he had to observe silence. In the royal court his prestige slumped. The king jeered at him. He left Pratiṣṭhāna and desirous of putting an end to his life before the Vindhya-vāsinī goddess, entered the

Vindhya forests. During his wanderings he heard the Paiśācī language spoken by non-human beings like Yakśas, Rākśasas and ghosts. A new hope rose in his heart. He learnt that language. He heard numerous tales about the Vidyādharas from Kāṇabhūti. All the store of tales of Vararuci had come to him. He added to it many other tales which he heard from the forest dwellers. He classified those tales. He divided them into seven volumes each of a lakh of verses. For seven years with his blood Guṇāḍhya, wrote the great book, called Bṛhatkathā, on palm leaves.

After completing the work, Guṇāḍhya wanted it to be propagated among the learned. He had two disciples, Guṇadeva and Nandideva. They asked him not to despair. The King Sātavāhana was a patron of knowledge ; he would surely patronise the great work. So Guṇāḍhya sent to the royal court his two disciples, with his book. He himself waited in a garden outside the city.

When the work was placed before the king, he was far from pleased. The men who brought the book looked like ghosts. The book was in the ghostly language and written in blood. Yet seeing the volume of the work the king was inwardly smitten with jealousy. He said with the utmost contempt and rudeness "Fie on the work which is written with blood in the ghostly Paisācī language" and he spat.

Guṇāḍhya was extremely dejected. He lit a fire and sitting before it, read out each leaf of the book to his disciples in the jungle and threw it into the fire. The birds and beasts also came to listen to these wonderful tales and all shed tears. For days and months the master was reading the tales ; not a morsel of food did he touch. Six volumes were already thus consigned to the flames, only one remained and this was, strangely enough, rescued by the king Sātavāhana himself.

Because of the sin of refusing patronage to the great work, the king was smitten with a grave malady, which could be cured by saving the remaining portion of the work and asking pardon of the poet. The king went to the forest and fell at the poet's feet. He was pardoned and the last volume was given to him. Śatavāhana then had a special story-institution (Kathāpīṭha) created in his city. These stories were continually told by the disciples of Guṇāḍhya.

Bṛhatkathā in Paiśācī belongs somewhere from 700-400 B.C. The original work is completely lost. Had it not been to the efforts of Somadeva and Kśemendra, both from Kashmir, and belonging to the eleventh century, no record of Bṛathkathā would have remained. Somadeva's monumental work Kathāsaritsāgara is internationally famous. All that we know about him is that he was the son of a Brahmin called Rāma and became a court-poet of Kashmir. In order to amuse the widowed queen Sūryavatī he told these tales. Kśemendra's work is shorter and called the Brhatkathā-manjarī.

Kings and Story-telling

The kings were patrons of good collections of tales. In the Parśiṣṭa-paravan, Hemacandra describes the king of the town Ramaṇīya who was very fond of listening to stories. Every day a citizen was summoned to tell him a story. The king Udāyi was told the story of Aṇṇikāputra who founded the city of Pāṭaliputra by a wise man. In the Kathasaritsāgara, the king Naravahanadatta was amused by Vasantaka's stories. The king Vikrama or Trivikrama also knew a good many stories. A vampire told him twenty-five riddles which have become world-famous. We find a reference in the Kathasaritsāgara of the Kings Sinhabala and Dharma in the Dakśiṇāpatha-Maharashtra who were good story-tellers and bards.

Mahavīra and his disciples :

Mahavīra tells the story of Valkalacīrī to Śreṇika near Rājagṛha. Just when he is about to finish his story the gods came rushing through the sky and asked him about the last Kevalī or Jina. 'Jambu shall be the Kevalī' is the reply of Mahavira and he relates many a tale about the former lives of Jambu. Jambu also was a good story-teller. He seems to have told eight tales to his wives and one to a robber. One of them is the famous parable of a man fallen into the well and dying and licking honey drops. It is found Vin the Mahābhārata, as also in the Buddhist, Jewish, Christian and Muslim parables. Prabhava was a robber but later became disciple of Jambu.

Among the famous Jain scholars, Hemacandra, Merutunga, Hariśeṇa have valuable story collections to their credit.

The fortune-tellers have a good stock of stories. In the Pariśiṣṭa-parvan such a fortune-teller or Naimittika is said to have told king Udāyi a number of tales about Pāṭaliputra.

Buddhaghosa :

Buddhagosa is the most famous commentator of the Buddhist Tipiṭṭakas in Pali. He belonged to the fifth century. He is said to have been born in Ghoṣagrāma in Magadha. His name was Ghoṣa. His mother's name was Keśinī. His father was a Brahmin and the royal priest. At the age of seven Ghoṣa became proficient in the Vedic lore. Once he was found sitting on the idol of Viṣṇu and eating parched gram. When the Brahmins in the temple saw this, they became furious and said "why are you sitting on the idol ? Ghoṣa replied "the gram also are Viṣṇu. How am I to know which is Viṣṇu and which is not ?" The Brahmins were non- plussed. They complained to his father. He said that his son was a child, did not know what he was doing and so should be pardoned. Young Ghoṣa became so well-versed in all the Śāstras that he defeated many pundits in debates. Pleased with his knowledge the king gave him a village as a gift.

Ghoṣa later on was defeated in argument by a Buddhist monk Revata. Ghoṣa then became a Buddhist and the disciple of Revata. He wrote a detailed commentary on the Jātaka-stories. In his commentaries of other Pali works too, valuable story-material is found. Had it not been for the efforts of Buddhaghosa these stories and the Jātakas would have remained in oblivion.

The Puranic Tradition :

Of the puranic tradition next to Vyāsa the name of Śuka has a peculiar significance in the Indian story tradition. Even among the Gond it is said that tale of immortality and creation was overheard by the parrot, when Śiva was recounting it to his wife. Śiva came to know of it and wanted to kill the intruder. But the bird rushed into the stomach of the sage Vyāsa. The sage protected him. He came out as Śuka, the son of the sage and preserved the story-traditions. The parrot has become thus the symbol of Śuka. Books like the Śukasaptatī are a testimony to it. Many tales about the dialogues between the parrot and the maina belong to this class.

Women Story-teller :

No eminent women story-tellers have been mentioned in the epics. In the Jātakas also no woman story-teller is referred to. In the Jain literature, in the Pariśiṣṭaparavan, a Brahmin's daughter is said to have gone to the king's court and told a story. Similarly, in the same book Jambu's eight wives are represented as story-tellers. Yet the princesses, their attendants, the courtizans, and merchants' wives knew many tales as is seen from the Kathāsaritsāgara.

The Traditional Story-tellers :

There are certain communities in India which are known to be custodians of the traditional sacred tales. The Pardhan are the bards and story-tellers of the Gond. In Maharashtra the Mang untouchables are adept story-tellers. A Mang man is addressed as Suratā or poet or story-teller by other communities. So are the Mahar. The shepherds have their own mythology. In the Telugu regions, Asadi, or the priest from the untouchable Madiga community conducts the feast and festival of the village goddess Poleramma. The Madiga are custodians of the ritual and sacred tales of other village goddesses too. The shepherds in this region have their own Purāṇas and the Madigas chant them. In Saurashtra the Ravanahathha beggars sing the songs on the king Bhartṛhari.

Thus all religious sects have their own traditional singers and story-tellers which receive respectful treatment by their followers. An exception to this rule seems to be the Mahānubhāvas who have a ban on the popular songs. Yet many songs like the marriage-songs of Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa, called Dhavaḷe are found in their literature too.

4

the myth

(1) *The Technical term* :

The word I have used for 'myth' is Daivatakathā. The original Sanskrit word Purāṇa-kathā was an excellent word, but the Purāṇas signify a particular class of literature and hence the word could not be generalized.

The word Dhrama-kathā or religious tale has also been avoided, because the Buddhists and Jains call any moral tale Dharma-kathā. So to avoid a clash between the two different categories of mythical and moral tales, I thought it better to drop the word.

Śaunaka's word Pavitrākhyāna (sacred-tale) was a suitable word, because, myths are sacred tales. This is the next best word after 'purāṇa'. Yet in Marathi tradition Ākhyāna is usually coupled with Kīrtana and implies a very long narration of a series of incidents. Hence it does not present all the characters of a myth as it is now interpreted by folklorists.

(2) *Ancient Tradition of Myths* :

Myths originated when man was on the second stage of culture. Man was able after the discovery of language to interpret nature. This interpretation consolidated in myths. Myths, according to Andrew Lang, are the history of man's early development.

(3) *The Nature of Myths* :

(1) Myths originate in polytheistic religious systems. (2) When old religion dwindles and a new one takes its place, original myths degenerate into legends and fairy-tales. (3) Myths connected

with religious rites need a special treatment. Hence instead of incorporating them in this book, I intend to write separately on them. (4) The most important of mythical tales are the tales of origin and starlore.

I

The Indra Myths

Indra being the representative example of the Vedic gods, I have discussed the Indra tales and their influence on folklore in general. The Indra myths are the earliest Indian myths because Indra was the first national hero of India.

II

The Tales of Origin

(1) A comparative study of the Vedic tale and a folktale of origin. (2) The typical puranic idea of the Bījamantra. (3) Superstitions about menstruation. (4) Śiva and Pāravatī as the parents of the world. (5) Sītā also as the mother of mankind. (6) The curse on women. (7) Origin of castes.

The tales of Pralaya or the great flood or fire that brings an end of the world and creates another one. They are the antithesis of the creation-tales.

III

Astronomical Tales

(1) Tales of the Earth and the sky. According to the ancient mythology all over the world, the earth is the wife of the sky. But in later Indian tradition the sun is the husband of the earth.

(2) *The Sun Myths*

(1) Sun-myths are not found in the Vedas. Only the twelve names of the sun-god and a few broken references. No elaborate tales. An analysis of these patches. (2) The sun's lameness gives rise to a bunch of myths and traditions later on. (3) The relationship between the sun and the moon.

The Moon-myths

(1) Moon legends excel in number. (2) Moon's influence on women. (3) The legend of Candrabhāgā and the account of the churning of the ocean. (4) The spots on the moon. Various interpretations about it.

IV

The Star Myths

(1) *Sun, Moon and the Stars*

Their relationship. The sun and the moon as parents and stars their children. This non-Vedic idea is common all over the world; found in many parts of India as well. (2) The sun eats his children. This belief is found in myths all over the world. (3) Same name for the sun and moon. (4) The difference between the Nakśatras or constellations and Tārakas or stars. Vedic account of the Nakśatras. Twenty seven constellations. (5) The Kṛttikās or Pleiades. Their legends all over the world. The legends of the great bear or Saptarṣis. (6) Rohiṇī, Mṛgaśirṣa and Vyādha. (7) Citrā (8) Puṣya and Punarvasu. (9) Agastya. (10) Arundhati. (11) Dhruva —the polar star. (12) Rāhu. (13) Mangal or Mars. (14) Buddha or Mercury. (15) Guru or Jupiter. (16) Śukra or Venus. (17) Śani or Saturn. (17) Aśani or the meteor.

V

Conclusion

When we take into account the star-tales, we find that all over the world tales are found only about the rain bringing stars like the Kṛtikās or the Pleaides. The Greeks give more detailed and very fascinating tales about many stars. In India, however, the story material is extremely scanty and scrappy.

Only twenty-seven constellations and a few planets and stars are mentioned. Yet there are legends of only about a few above-mentioned ones. From which we can conjecture that at the time of the Vedas only, much of the older starlore was extinct.

The lack of proper sun-moon myths in Vedic literature also supports it. A perusal of starlore all over the world shows that a considerable portion of the pre-Vedic starlore is lost for ever.

5

the fairy tale

After having taken into account the definition and the scope of the fairy tale and the distribution of the motifs, as described by Krappe, the present chapter deals with two most important aspects of the Indian fairy-tales viz., (1) the bearing of the Indian fairy-tales on the historical versions or literary versions and (2) the supernatural element in the fairy-tales.

The Historical Versions

The difference between the Indian fairy-tales and the fairy-tales of many other lands is that the former has a long cultural and literary background. Many of the Indian fairy-tales have some kind of version in ancient literature, Vedic, epic, classical Sanskrit, Prakrit, Ardhamagadhi and Pali literature. Almost every important tale has its prototype somewhere in these ancient records. India's cultural and literary tradition is very old and rich. The age and richness of tradition are conducive to an equally varied and ample stock of fairy tales and legends. The fairy-tales is a complicated piece of prose, interspersed with typical rhymes. Its tone is serious. Its plot is well knit and presupposes some perfection in style as well. Many ideas entered in a folk-tale reach the most advanced layers of culture and yet there is something in its spirit which is primitive. The court of king Vikrama does not signify a real royal court but the faked court of the king lion in the Pancantantra. Many items in a fairy-tale are devoid of the historical element. They suggest the primitive survivals, rather than historical facts. And yet the development of a fairy-tale demands an advancement of culture. In places like

Central Africa or Australia where nothing but the most primitive or elementary culture is accosted, the fairy-tale is unknown.

The Supernatural Beings

Indian supernatural beings are the Yakśas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Guhyakas, Rākśasas, Vidyādharas, and Sarpas or Nāgas and the Bhūtas or Piśācas.

Their common characteristics are :—

1. They have supernatural and magical powers.
2. They fly in the air.
3. They can become invisible and change their form.
4. They are well-versed in arts, music and dancing.
5. They can copulate with human beings.
6. Their offspring begotten of a human mate is human.
7. They have no wings like fairies except the Kinnaras at times have them. The Vidyādharas and Gandharvas can fly on account of the magical powers of the necklaces they wear.
8. They prefer to walk about at night rather than daytime.
9. They are important as either the promoters of good luck of the human hero or heroine or the destroyers of it.

In this chapter I have described only the Yakśas and the Rākshasas and their bearing on the fairy-tale.

Apsaras : The Apsaras is the typical Indian fairy. The Apsaras are beautiful and endowed with many virtues. Of the many tales about the Apsaras, I have analysed two tale-types.

The first tale-type : The peculiarity of this tale-type is the conjugal love between a human being and an Apsaras, like Pururava and Urvaśī. I have given a group of tales scattered in literature and folklore of different provinces.

The second tale-type is that of an orphan girl who is persecuted by her brothers. This tale-type I have called the Sonsānkhalī type which also has groups of tales attached to it.

The Role of Animals in the Fairy-tale.

The wisdom of animals is unusually vindicated in the fairy-tale. The animal husband or the wife, or the guardian, is a common feature.

Some Motifs

(1) The golden palaces and gardens of wish-granting trees.
(2) The parrot brings the fruit of immortality.
(3) The brother serpent.
(4) The golden tree in the dream.
(5) The bird emitting gold.
(6) The vessel giving food.
(7) The heroine securing half the kingdom for the hero.

Summing up

(1) The relation of the fairy-tale with the moral tale.
(2) The relation of the fairy-tale with a myth.

the legend

The technical word for the legend is Dantakathā, which is current in all Indian languages. Tracing the history of this word, I found it only in the Pāṇḍav-pratāp of Śridhar in Marathi, a sixteenth century text. The word is absent in Sankrit, Prakrit and Pali literature as well as the lexicographic literature of these languages. Yet the word must have an older tradition and I hope an older literary source will be found out when more digging is made in the Prakrit manuscripts. The word Dantakathā, I believe, is derived from an old word Udanta which means gossip or the traditional tale. 'Kathā' is a mere appendage. The legend is of two types.

The Migratory Legends

(1) The migratory legend and (2) the local legend. The legend is originally a localised tale. But some tales seem to spread far and wide and it is not often easy to find the original source. The legend is shorter than the fairy-tale. Versions of the legends are also more limited in number than those of the fairy-tale. The motifs even if large in number are more stable and migration does not seem to change them. Hence, polygenesis is not possible in the legend. It originates at a definite locale and then spreads far and wide; hence it is easier than the fairy-tale to trace the source of a legend. The spread of the migratory legend is naturally very much wider than the local legend, though more limited than the fairy-tale. The most famous example of the migratory legend given by Krappe is the 'Victim's last words,' which is of Indian origin and has spread all over the world.

The second internationally known tale is that of the Wandering Jew. The source of the tale is not yet definitely known, but scholars

are of the opinion that it originates in Arabia in the tales of Al Khadir.

The Story of Chandrahāsa

The best known example of the Indian migratory tale is the tale of Candrahāsa. The tale has been discussed by Dr. Winternitz in his History of Indian literature and Dr. Kethar in Prāchīn Maharashtra, commenting upon it, says that this is one of the oldest of Indian tales which originated in Maharashtra and travelled abroad.

I have added examples of Marathi variants current among the aborigines and untouchables of Maharashtra.

The Story of Midas

A tale which is current all over India viz. the story of the king with ass's or ox's ears, is of Grecian origin ; it is the tale of king Midas. I have discussed the various versions of it in India as well as abroad.

The Local Legend

The field of the local legend is so vast and varied that it is not possible to discuss it at length in a limited space. The tales are divided into four categories, viz., (1) tales connected with historical personages and events, (2) traditional tales about places, (3) tales of buried treasures, (4) tales of haunted houses, trees etc.

Tale of Pilgrimages

India abounds in sacred places. Each river, mountain and lake has its tale. Many such tales are recorded in the Rāmayaṇa, Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas, and also in Pali and Jain literature. The versions of the tale of the same place vary in these different sources. Some time the locality of the same tale seems to have undergone a change in different literary evidences. e.g., the locale of the story of Manu is not mentioned in its earliest version of the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa. In the Mahābhārata it is the forest region of Viśālā where the fish foretells Manu of the coming flood. In the Bhāgvata Purāṇa however, the river is the Kṛtamālā river and the incidents

of the tale occurred in the Malaya mountain in the south. Viṣṇu-purāṇa also supports this view.

The tale of Jimūtavāhana

The best example of the Indian tale which had its origin in the Chambal valley and later on spread over the whole of the Indian continent is that of Jimūtavāhana.

I have briefly mentioned some provincial legends like Khemroji and Ābhāde in Rajputana or the story of the princess's ghost who is in ceaseless search of her lost lover in the Abu and Kathiawar.

Summing up :

The Myth and the Legend

The origin of a legend is in a fact yet tradition attaches much of the mythical attributes to the hero in order to enhance his greatness. Hence heroes like Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Manu etc. become heroes of mythical tales as well. The same tendencies are found in folk-legends as well. So many heroes of castes are also deified. And hence it is not easy to demarcate between the myth and the legend. Most of the culture heroes are thus mythologised. Many aetiological tales are also local legends.

7

the fable

The term I have chosen for the fable is Kalpita-kathā. The fable is a fictitious tale. The fable chiefly imbibes the moral tales. Many of the moral tales are animal-tales. The tone of these tales is severe. A trend of subtle but caustic humour is visible in them. Yet they cannot pass as humorous tales, because it is their purpose to teach and to criticize.

The fable is a product of a well developed literary genius. No fable is found in the Vedic literature. The Mahābhārata and the Jātakas are the earliest literary sources of the fables.

Animal Tale

The animals in the tales behave according to the particular characteristic attached to them, viz., the shrewdness of the crow and the jackal, the curiosity of the monkey etc. These animals are however, symbols of mankind, as opposed to the animals of fairy-tales who have supernatural powers. The animals in the latter type of tales are representatives of the totemistic beliefs.

Moral Tale

The moral tales are older than animal-tales.

Moral tales are found in the Upaniṣads. In the Mahābhārata the moral tales and animal-tales are fused into one type, and hence-forward the animal-tale became a part and parcel of the moral tale. In the Jātakaṭṭhakathā, the word for the moral tale is Guṇakathā. Parable or Dṛṣṭānta is also another form of the moral tale.

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the riddle

I have used the Sanskrit word Prahelikā to signify the riddle.

The riddle, like the myth, has an ancient form and tradition and yet unlike the myth the riddle is still in vogue. Every day new riddles are being formed and the ancient tradition goes on ceaselessly. The riddle, unlike the myth, is not only restricted to the religious and cultural fields alike; it is an important literary form as well. The literary riddle has no bearing whatsoever on the religious tradition. It aims chiefly at knowledge and entertainment; it is meant especially for the grown up and the educated ones, while the traditional riddle seems to entertain children and to some extent women.

Synonyms of the Riddle : I have given synonyms for the riddle from different Indian languages, ancient and modern, e.g., in Sanskrit we find Brahmodya, Praśna, Kūṭa, Pravahlikā and Prahelikā ; in Marathi, Ūkhaṇā, Umāṇa, Āhaṇā, Kohaḍā and Kulan gadē, In Gujarati there is Ukhaṇo, and in old Gujarati Kohyaḍo. In Sindhi Ukhaṇī. In Hindi and Bengali Paheli chiefly. But in rural areas Buzauwal, Buzbuzavalī are also found. The Muḍas have Nutam Kahānī. In Malwa Bhulbhulaiyā is used. In Kanarese Oganu, Oḍakathe, Oḍagate, Prahelike and Sūchigārtha are found. In Telugu Viḍikatha and in Tamil and Malyalam Viḍikadāi and Viḍikadai are found. The Kanarese, Telugu and Tamil words are derived from the Sanskrit word Bṛhatkathā which is Vaḍḍakahā in Prakrit. This particular choice of the word indicates the bearing of the riddle on the tale.

The Nature of the Riddle

The riddle is composed chiefly of the question and expects an

answer too. The question signifies the concealment of a fact by means of either a metaphor or a simile. The answer-part of the riddle reveals the secret. As a matter of fact, the act of concealment gives beauty, form and signification to the riddle. The cultural background of the riddle is very vast and varied. Except the playful riddles of children, the riddles in most parts of the world are connected with grave situations and religious rites.

Frazer was the first folklorist to have studied this significance of the riddle. Many are the varieties of the riddle.

Brahmodya

Brahmodya is the most ancient of the Vedic words. It signifies an utterance concerning a theological question at the time of a sacrificial performance. The theological riddle is presented in a superb form and handled in a masterly way by the Vedic sages. The Samhitās and the Brāhmaṇas as well as the Upaniṣads give a number of hymns of this type.

In the Mahābhārata the riddles are also theological in nature, though the background is not necessarily ritualistic.

Kūṭa

The word Kuṭa is used in the Sanskrit meaning a trap or a hammer. Yet later in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa it is used in the sense of the riddle.

In the Mahābhārata the Kuṭaś lokas are found.

Pravahlikā, Prahelikā

Prahelika :

The words Pravahlikā and Prāhelikā are taken to be synonyms by Sanskrit scholars. Yet the roots of these two terms are different, viz., Pravahl and Prahel. Indian lexicographers of the medieval times as well as modern European scholars have taken not of only two distinct roots and have tried to give their connotations. Yet how the older form Pravahlikā changed into Prahelikā, is not yet ascertained, as the clue to intermediate steps of the evolution both linguistic and cultural is still nowhere to be found. Both the terms, judging

them by the explanation, mean a secretive sentence, and hence something which is significant, mystic.

Pravahlikā, a pre-Mahābhārata term, and Prahelikā is a post Mahābhārata word. Neither term is to be found in the Mahābharata.

The term Pravahlikā is for the first time mentioned in the Aitareya and Kauṣitakī Brāhmaṇas with reference to some hymns in the Atharvaveda. It is found in Śankhāyana Śrauta Sūtra and also in the Bṛhaddevatā.

Aitaṣa-Pralāpa

Aitaṣa-pralāpa is a very good example of what the Pravahlikā signified. It is the unintelligible prattle of Aitaṣa.

So also the abuses of the gods are also said to be incorporated in the Bṛhaddevatā.

Looking to the abusive character of many riddles connected with ritual and marriage in all the layers of Hindu society, we know that the root of the custom is to be found in the Pravahlikā of the Vedic times.

The Pravahlikā seems to be used in the ritual. The Prahelikā, however, seems only to be amusive and has a lighter vein. It is literary in character. In Sanskrit poetics it is taken to be a form of base poetry. Daṇḍin in his treatise on poetics, Kavyadarśa, has described sixteen types of Prahelikās or literary riddles. He has aiso made a mention of fourteen types of vulgar or defective riddles. The riddles are based chiefly on a question and only such riddles has he dealt with.

In Viśṇudharmottara Purāṇa, the obscenity in the riddle is specially mentioned.

Kūṭa-Kathānaka.—Riddle-Story

Kūṭa-Kathānaka and Kathā-Prahelikā

The riddle story is an evolution of the literary form of the story as well as the riddle. In the Vetāla Pancavamśati are riddle stories. Yet they are called only stories in the Kathāsaritsāgara. In the prose version by Janbhaladatta, they are called Kathā-prahelikā or the riddle stories. The word Kūṭa-kathānaka is found in Pariśiṣta-

parvan, which means a story which is fictitious and unanswerable as well.

However, the riddle-story did not find its way into the scientific treatises on poetics. The story element is found in many popular riddles all over India.

Praśnottara or Questions and Answers

In Maharashtra, in the Lāvaṇī form of song, in Marathi the theological riddles are preserved. They are called Praśnottara.

In Uttar Pradesh Malhor or Palhāyā are of the same nature.

The question and answer technique has given rise to an inexhaustive stock of play-riddles which are in vogue among children all over India.

Death riddles

This technique is found in riddles of death of the Gond in the Drug District.

Riddles without question

Just as the majority of riddles are based upon a question, there are some without any posers. They contain a statement meant to divert the listener's attention from the chief issue. viz. in Maharashtra there are riddles or Ukhāṇas which married women use when they have to utter the name of the husband ceremonially and vice versa. Another kind of such riddles is the couplets girls recite when they play traditional games like Phugaḍī and Jhimmā. The third kind of such riddles which are known all over India is the abusive songs or couplets at marriages when both the parties abuse each other heartily. These songs are called riddles in Maharashtra alone.

of Indian folktales. He has used all the material in the six collections that were before him. It is to be noted that from 1884 no indicing of the motifs was done till Dr. Verrier Elwin in 1949 gave short motif-indices to his collections of tales from Mahakoshal and Orissa, following the Motif-index of Aarne and Thompson. Though there is considerable material in English on Indian folklore, yet, after the Indianist Theory of the Philological School which was held up by Max Müller and others, there is no contribution on the theoretical side. Efforts are chiefly directed to collections and surveys. Even the analytical work is not as satisfactory as it should be. The studies in our folklore lack a definite policy which would enhance scientific research. Some renowned scholars, like Temple, Grierson, Crooke, S. C. Mitra, K. P. Mitra and Elwin have made valuable contributions no doubt, yet we need more collection, more translation from Indian languages into English, translations in Indian languages themselves and a thorough investigation even into minutest details. The work so far is only of the nature of a foundation. The real structure is yet to be raised. The studies in Indian folklore need a new orientation, and an entirely objective analysis of facts.

The conditions of folklore studies in Indian languages is deplorable. A lot of collection has been done. Yet the work done so far lacks a scientific attitude. Pioneers like Tagore, Zaverchand Meghani, Ram Naresh Tripathi, Kaka Kalelkar, Sane Guruji and Devendra Satyarthi, in order to popularise this neglected field, have kept in view only the bright and emotionally beautiful aspects of folklore—especially folk-songs. They have even made people believe thereby that folklore is the chief indication of everything that is artistic, emotionally rich and noble in Indian culture. In reality, however, what the student of folklore finds is that a good deal of it is tedious, very ugly, and on the whole detrimental to the progressive, intellectual tendencies among the people. The art which we usually find in folk-poetry, folk-music, folk-dances, folk-drama and folk-arts, is mediocre. It lacks originality and the brilliance of imagination which elevates all works of art. The display of creative talent is seldom impressionable in these products, made and preserved by the folk-traditions. Such literature, dance, crafts, etc. originate and persist only among the illiterate, and hence they can hardly rise to the level of the real

products of art created by the geniuses in the respective fields. That is why every aspect of folklore should be judged objectively. The modern folklorist in India has to seek answers to questions such as, what place has folklore in our traditional beliefs and customs? How has folklore affected our traditional literary taste? How does it control the expression of the aesthetic experiences? Many folk-plays when they are staged in the art-centres, have proved to be stereotyped and mediocre. Much of folklore is melodramatic and fit to satisfy an unjudicious taste.

The sentimentalism of the veterans has affected the young folklorists of the country so much, that cheap imitations of the same old praise-phraseology, are coming out in abundance. The time for making propaganda for folklore is gone. We need a more realistic approach to it, in order to make this vast store of cultural material really serviceable in understanding what its real contribution to Indian life, art and thought is. If we tackle it in this spirit then will it hold clues to many a moot problem of culture. Mere sentimental boosting of it will destroy the subtle results. A good many processes of the unification of India's culture are hidden in folklore only. And howsoever defective it may from the purely artistic point of view folklore is a good conductor of divergent thought-currents. It is a mine in which layers of many-hued cultures are lying buried in a terribly compressed condition. It is a deposit of innumerable and unaccountable data about humanity where hard realities are mixed up with absurd fancies, where the universal and the local have mixed up. In it astounding gambles are linked up with the strictest codes of human behaviour; promiscuity and purity are blended together and yet if we scrutinise folklore objectively, we come to know that it is the inherent tendency towards unification that gives folklore such contrasting and varied characteristics. If we focus our attention on the unifying nature of folklore, the contradictions become much less acute and the ideologies behind each form of folklore become clearer and clearer. We see not a world of chaos but of order. Instead of puppet-like humanity dramatized against a fantastic antiquated age, we see mankind walking on the perennial high roads of normality.

It will not be beside the point to cite the warning to the folklorists sounded by Prof. Philip Jordan, when he presided over the

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proverbs and idioms

A Proverb is a pithy sentence which tells an unpalatable truth in a condensed way. The statement of the truth however, is incomplete; it is exaggerated and expressed metaphorically.

A proverb is based chiefly on experience and the commonsense of human experience has given rise to many common proverbs all over the word viz. 'where there is smoke, there is fire,' etc.

The European Tradition

Aristotle was the first scholar to study proverbs scientifically. He made a copious collection of the proverbs. They were mostly derived from Greek. And subsequently Latin proverbs reached other European languages which developed later.

Spain is a country well known for proverbs, and so is Russia. Many of the proverbs of these countries are of eastern origin. Hebrew and the Arabic languages are responsible for introducing the oriental element in Western proverbs.

Indian Tradition

Sūkti is the word for maxim, which is found in the Brāhmaṇa literature. So is the word Subhāśita. The epics are full of these Subhāśitas.

Many Subhāśitas are attributed to Cāṇakya and Bhartṛhari. Sanskrit words for the proverb, are Subhāśita, Sūkti, Lokokti, Ābhāṇaka, and Laukika Pravāda.

Similarity in proverbs

Weather proverbs

Weather—proverbs are the same all over India and in Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, United Provinces and Maharashtra, the similarity is due to the fact that these proverbs are attributed to Bhāḍalī or Bhaḍḍar. In Karnatak and farther south weather-proverbs are not attributed to any such person.

Tales Connected with Proverbs and Idioms

I have traced the tales behind many idioms like 'Satīcĕ vān' (Sati's vow), 'Sutāne Swrgālā jāṇē (to go to heaven by means of a thread) etc. in Marathi. Many of these tales are Vedic in origin and some have even pre-Vedic trends preserved in them.

The idiom "Avaḍambara mājavanē" in Marathi can be explained thus. The word Āḍambara is a Sanskrit word and so has penetrated all the Indian languages. The Marathi idiom means 'to create an uproar.' The original word Āḍambara in Sanskrit means Meghāḍambara or thunder (the word 'megha' is often dropped). It also means the beating of a drum. The story of how the heavenly drum (in the form of thunder) was beaten is found in the Kakkaṭa Jātaka. There was a gigantic golden crab in the Ganges. One of its fangs reached the heaven and another the nether world. The crab used to kill elephants when they came to bathe in the river. Hence the elephants left the place. Once, however, the Bodhistta elephant entered the river with his spouse and killed the crab when it attacked him. The broken fangs went with the current. One came to the hands of Vāsudeva. He made a drum (dundubhi) which was called Ānaka-dundubhi. The other fang went to the ocean. It was found by the demons and they made another drum (bherī) of it which was called Āḍambara-bherī. When the god Indra defeated the Asuras in a battle, he came into the possession of this drum. When it thunders people say that the 'Āḷanbara or Āḍambara cloud is thundering'.

Kṛṣṇa's father Vasudeva is called Ānaka-dundhubhi ; how and why he came to be connected with the drum is nowhere explained. There is no story to that effect in Sanskrit literature. In the Jātakas

Vasudeva is being changed into Vāsudeva. The story of Āḍambara-bherī is not to be found in pre-Buddhist literature. In the Purāṇas also we do not find such a story. The only record about it is that Āḍambara-bherī was Indra's drum and thunder symbolises it.

10

folk-etymology

Etymology pervades the entire field of verbal science as grammatical and philological studies point out. We are not concerned here with pure etymology but with its popular bearing. Without etymology the study of folklore would be incomplete and inadequate. Yet the type of etymology that one finds in folklore, though it has the social sanction is different from the grammaran's etymology. However, at times, it appears to be in perfect accordance with it.

Definition

Folk-etymology, as it has been called by folklorists, has been defined thus by the Rev. A Smythe Palmer, in his Dictionary of Folk-etymology: By Folk-etymology is meant the influence exercised upon words, both as to their form and meaning, by the popular use and misuse of them.

In special sense, it is intended to denote the corruption which words undergo owing either to false ideas about their derivation or to a mistaken analogy with other words to which they are supposed to be related.

Max Müller's Views

Max Müller in his famous books, Comparative Mythology and also The Chips from a German Workshop and The Science of Mythology as well, has repeatedly said that 'Mythology is the disease of language' and also 'Mythology is the pathology of language.' He was severely attacked by the then newly rising Anthropological School, and especially by Andrew Lang, who lost no oppor

tunity to jeer at the verbal pathology of the old scholar. Though many of Max Müller's theories both in mythology as well as comparative philology have become obsolete, yet his statements quoted above can still prove correct, of course, with some modification. Not every myth, but a particular kind of myths e.g. the aetiological myths and local legends do owe their existence to false etymology, which Max Müller called the disease of language, and naturally he sought for the pathological explanation of the disease through myths.

The Function of Folk-etymology

In the nineteenth century Carl Anderson and the Rev. A. Smythe Palmer were two great exponents of folk-etymology. Their analysis of the verbal metamorphosis is as follows : (1) When old words become obsolete their meaning changes or the words themselves undergo a metamorphosis. (2) People have a natural aversion for the language, dress, customs and manners of the alien people. So mispronunciation of the foreigner's language or deliberate twisting of words is a common occurrence. (3) Wrong interpretations of old words by scholars also play an important part in making false etymologies permanent. The well-known example in European folklore-studies is that of Parrault in the tale of Cinderella. Palmer says, 'In our nursery tale Folk-etymology has clothed Cinderella's foot with glass in the place of miniver. It is now generally believed (e.g. by Mr. Ralston and M. Littre) that the substance of 'la petite pantoufle de verrs' in Charles Perrault's story of Gendrillion (1697) was originally but a kind of fur called vair - a word now obsolete in France, except in heraldry, but locally preserved in England as the name of weasel and that some receiter or transcriber to whom the meaning of Vair was unknown substituted the more familiar but less probably verre, thereby dooming Cinderella to wear a glass slipper.'

(4) It is not alone the form of the words that undergo a metamorphosis from some mistaken assimilation, but its signification gets warped and perverted from a false relationship or analogy being assumed e.g. the word Babrel or Ba-bel or Bab-bel meant 'the gate of

God or Bel,' which by the quaint humour of primitive times had turned to the Hebrew word Babel which means confusion. In English we find the word Do-evil turn into the Devil and from life-load derived the word livelihood.

Examples in Indian Folklore

Of the corruption of meaning of words when culture changes and old conventions become either obsolete or seem vulgar to people I can recall a few examples. The origin and growth of slang in the language is indicated by them e.g. (1) in Marathi, there is the word Bāṣkala. The word now borders on the slang. It is an adjective which denotes something that is vulgar and nonsensical yarns or vulgar talk is called Bāṣkaḷa. However, if we dig into the proper history of the word, we find that it can be traced to the learned and venerated Bāṣkala, the preserver of a Samhitā or the text recention of the Ṛgveda. Why the name of this great man corrupted like this can be seen from the cultural traditions of the province. Maharashtra was originally a non-Vedic land. To this land the sage Agasti brought the Vedic teachings and religion. It is probable that the majority of the people, unable to understand the Vedic incantations and also looking upon them as something that was alien, had the impression that the chants were only nonsensical prattle or jargon. Or it may also be that when the majority of the people in the land had forgotten the Vedas which were of no use to the masses in their religion, the word became obsolete, and an entirely new meaning came to be attached to it. So much so that by no means can the slang be shaken out of it.

The last line of a Subhaśita, viz. 'Strange is the course of the fate' is very popular and used as a maxim. The Konkani proverb that extends it means 'strange is the course of fate, for the cook has swallowed the elephant.'

(2) In the Kumārasambhava of Kālidāsa and in the Śivapurāṇa as well we come across an apt example of folk-etymology in the derivation of the word Umā. Pārvatī was persuaded by her mother not to take the vow of penance, with the words U-mā "Oh do'nt" : and so the girl later on came to be called Umā.

Folk-etymology in the Vedic Literature

The process of folk-etymology is visible in Vedic literature as well. In the Brāhmaṇas we come across etymological explanations of various words. The compilers of the Brāhmaṇas were obviously men who were learned. However, owing to their complete faith in tradition, they have emphatically upheld folk-etymology instead of giving probable explanations of their own. This loyalty to the Vedic lore is visible to a great extent in the Nirukta of Yāska which was a special treatise on the Ṛgvedic etymology. As for example,
(1) Agni (Fire) : Agni was the first born of the gods and so was he called Agri, 'the first one or the leader.' Yet as the gods love secrecy, he was called Agni.
(2) Nyagrodha (bunyan) : The word should be really Nyagroha because the shoots of the bunyan tree grow downward. Yet owing to the love of mystery it came to be pronounced as Nyagrodha.

Puranic Folk-etymologies

Folk-etymology has created a number of beliefs and myths round many words. As for example, the word Śaśa which means a hare is applied to the moon also. A number of the moon myths have been woven round the hare. The word Kunti, the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, means virgin mother in folklore.

Local Legends

Of all the legends, the local legends are the most affected by folk-etymology.

As for example, the name of the god Mangeśa is said to be derived from the words 'trāhi māṃ girīśa' 'Protect me, O' lord of the mountain.' Many place-names, river-names, etc., have also their origin in folk-etymology. As, for example, Calcutta has its origin in 'Kali-Kśetra', as Satī or Kālī the wife of Śiva threw herself in the sacrificial fire of Dakśa at this place. Patna also has a long folk-tradition. The river Tungabhadrā has also a local and Puranic tradition. The names of dynasties like Cālukya, Bundelā also have a legendary origin which is explained only through folk-etymology.

11

humour in folklore

The popularity of folk-tales, folk songs, riddles etc. depends to a great extent on the humour they contain.

The humour in folklore is based chiefly on some defect, exaggeration, coarseness, slyness, ready wit, funny episodes, and some peculiar jingles of language.

Humour based on Defect

The field of humour based on a defect is extensive, because it always happens that a defect and a funny situation arising out of it, that create laughter among the people. From an innocent joke to a caustic and biting wit can this humour based on a defect reach. It can be classified thus:
(1) Humour based on a physical defect (2) humour based on a mental defect and (3) humour based on a social defect.

Physical Defect

Jokes on physical defects, such as lameness, squint, defective speech, dark complexion, and ugliness are proverbial. Folklore abounds in them. This type of humour is of course the lowest type of humour, often coarse and crude. It has no fine taste about it. Yet it is not always caustic. Sometimes even a physical defect creates some exceedingly funny situations and a lot of mirth. The whole atmosphere becomes sportive ; viz. a Santal was once ploughing his field. A stranger came along and asked the Santal in Hindi where the road led to. Not very able to grasp the meaning of the words, the Santal got frightened.

He took the stranger to be a robber and thought that he was demanding the bullocks. Here he gave him the bullocks and ran away. On the way he met his mother, who was bringing his food to the field. He told her all that had happened to him. The old woman was deaf. She thought the son was complaining of the food because there was no salt in it. She said, "What do I know about the vegetable? It was my daughter-in-law who cooked the food." The old woman's husband also was deaf. He heard something else. He said "Who knows what your mother and pestle are like?" The old woman then went to the daughter-in-law and took her to task for not putting salt in the food.

The young woman too was deaf. She said, "why do you get angry unnecessarily, mother? I spin yarn as best I can do. I do not bother whether it is thick or fine. I spin only a span. That much I have done:" There is a large class of tales which glorify a defect, the story of Tom Thumb is a good example of it. Many versions of this tale are found in India also.

Mental Defect

Of the mental defects foolishness is the best target of humour. The tales of foolish servants as well as of foolish masters are well known. Idleness is another trait which has given us a large number of humorous tales. Idler is often the glorious hero of a folktale, who comes out successful in many adventures.

Social Defects

Social inferiority such as based on poverty, low birth, etc. is a good motif for tales.

The caste-complex has attributed some blemishes to some castes chiefly and many a proverb as well as stories are woven round them, viz. the barber, the goldsmith, the money-lender have been the target of many a caustic joke. The social inferiority attributed to women is the basis of a number of tales where women are described as foolish, greedy, idle and unchaste.

There are stories which also are an antithesis to this and reveal virtues of some women. The tales about 'the old woman' are exceedingly enjoyable.

V

Humour based on Wedding.

Marriage is an occasion for every kind of mirth. In India humour is found in marriage songs. Many are the witty rhymes addressed to the bridal couple. The various relatives are also made fun of. The songs of the weddings of trees, and birds have a special and genial humour.

VI

The Humorous Mouse.

The mouse has been the hero of numerous witty tales.

VII

Pornographic Tales.

The widow has been an object of many a pornographic tale which people with a coarse taste have always found enjoyable,

The stories about the mother-in-law's relationship with her son-in-law are not uncommon. The sexy tales also usually tickle. Of such sexy, pornographic and coarse tales, I have found that not every tale which deals openly with sexual matters is a humorous tale. As a matter of fact the tales of origin describe coitus in detail and are yet free from vulgarity because they are very serious in their tone and the purpose is nothing but selective creation. In many such sexual tales in the classical and popular mythology, nowhere do we come across examples of the love between persons of the same sex.

Even bestiality is raised to the dignity of the normal coitus between the male and the female.

VIII

Tales of Tricksters.

The tales of tricksters form a special type of humour in folklore. India abounds in them. The stories of rogues who by their superior wits fool the common people always appeal to the sense

of humour of the popular mind. Yet the stories in which the trickster is tricked are even more popular.

The stories of thieves are popular in India from the ancient times. In the medieval times the popularity of these stories reached its zenith. The stories of the king thief Mūladeva abound in Sanskrit and Jain literature. The pair of thieves, Ghaṭa and Karpara, is found in the Kathasaritsāgara, and has many versions in the Indian folklore.

The background of the stories of Ghaṭa and Karpara is international.

The stories of thieves are of two kinds. The one class of stories presents a contest of two master thieves in outwitting each other. The other class describes how those who are mentally and physically feeble must be whipped by tyrants.

Torture of the master of his wife or his child by the rougish servant which ultimately results in the complete surrender of the master, this theme is found in every province of India; so also the cruelty exercised in subduing the socially superior by most sadistic means to tickle the popular sense of humour. Of the contest between master thieves the story of the 'Uncle and the Nephew' is widely spread.

The adventure element and youthful mirth are more obvious in the thief-tales than anywhere else. They form a contrast to the sombre dragging idealistic adventures of the hero prince who is rewarded ultimately with the love of a beautiful princess.

IX

Cumulative Songs and Tales and Nonsense Rhymes.

Cumulative songs and tales all over the world form a rich treasure of nursery humour. The old woman with her crooked penny has her Indian counterpart in the rat or monkey who lost its tail. The sparrow or parrot who lost its half grain of gram corn in a hole of a tree or the grinding wheel, who first requests the carpenter, king queen, a rat, the friend, the sea, a cat, an elephant and even ant to help it get back the half grain, but on their refusal to accede

to its request threatens each of them with punishment and even destruction and ultimately succeeds in getting back the half grain has its prototype in Europe as well. There is no cumulative nursery tale which is not steeped in humour. Similarly, a grotesque though genuine humour is found in the nonsense rhymes of all the countries which never failed to amuse children. India's share in nonsense rhymes is also quite significant. Many a play-song, which was originally connected with some ritualistic dance-form, is now found reduced to a nonsense rhyme. As the traditional ritual bearing is lost only words and sounds of the original song, much shortened, remain. The tradition being obliviated even the wording of the original song suffers from deterioration. Many a time only mere sound-production of the original wording is preserved. The hear-sake element mutilates original wording and many a time fanciful words which have no meaning at all, form a part of the song and make the entire song nothing but a meaningless jargon of words. The rhythm and rhyme, however, are excellently preserved and these keep the song going. The original wording is automatically converted into a delightful whimsicality and utter nonsense, causing amusement. The very simplicity of utterance makes the humour in the nonsense rhymes so general and so appealing too.

12

finer literary qualities in folklore

The theme of the chapter is to evaluate the artistic and literary qualities in folklore by applying some aesthetic tests. Certain questions arise when we start analyzing different aspects of folklore. Is folklore capable of artistic qualities ? Is the literary taste of the folk adequate enough to raise folk-literature to the level of renowed works of literary art in any age ? What is it that demarcates literature from traditional songs and tales ? What are the criteria to judge this traditional literary material ? Can folk-literature find a place in a gallery where specimens of the finest classical works of literature are presented ?

The answers to these inevitable questions are not simple to give. What we can do is only to attempt an objective inquiry and present the results; incomplete they are bound to be.

The chief object of the scrutiny is the finer poetic element, brilliance, beauty of composition, gracefulness, elegance, melodiousness, tastefulness and charming quality in general in folk-literature, if it is to be claimed as a product of art. The poetic element comprises the experience of beauty and the verbal form which contains it. Beauty is self-existant and fills the entire world of objects and emotions. Hence it is objective. The experience of beauty, however, is entirely subjective. It is this individualistic experience that is conveyed in the verbal expression.

There are certain external factors like the traditional taste and other conventions that affect the subjectivity of the individual's experience of beauty. The traditional works of literature are more social than literary in character. The individual creative urge has to conform to the social pattern of art and ethics, which is usually

the art and ethics of the multitude. It gives the work popularity and some grandeur; but at the same time, the work also is endowed with a stubbornness which is vulnerable. It yields to easy imitation which puts a limitation on the traditional products of literature. They prove inferior to the works produced by the literary talents of that age. The popular works lack the unbounded flight of the individual poet's free imagination, the immense variety of individual experience, the depth of emotions, the depiction of limitless moods, a free expression and above all vision. In traditional literature, the choice of subjects is limited. The mode of expression is fixed. Emotions degenerate into cheap melodramatic sentiments. The verbal form depends on rhythm and alliteration chiefly ; a set of popularly chosen verbal motifs is used. A set of traditionally set formulae to describe particular phenomena and events is evident. In an artistic work of literature, experience forms the content of expression and language is its tool. In traditional literary works, however, experience depends primarily on conventions. Language transforms into stylistic catches. Style is thus restricted with motifs. I have given a cursory analysis of style-motifs and ideological conventions.

Ancient Indian literature on the whole is very conventional. Symbolism characterizes the Indian artistic and literary taste. Indians have made quite a technique of symbols. It affects all the strata of expression equally. Symbolism in Indian literature is so vast and intricate that it has as yet been little studied. Some criteria applied to folklore have been dealt with here. They are as follows :

(1) In traditional literary works, the pattern is most important. Style depends on the pattern. Usually the demarcation between prose and verse is quite indistinct in Indian folklore. In bardic narrative prose and verse are closely knit and are inseparable. Yet when style is particularly emphasized and is to be given a particular bend then the difference between prose and verse becomes important. This necessitates the study of rhythmic prose in traditional literature. (2) In verse the folk-song is a significant unit. (3) Popular literature joins classical literature to folk-literature. All literary traits get spread in all the strata of literature through the active agency of popular literature only. The literature of the lowest stratum of society, the literature of the unlettered folks gradually absorbs the literary mannerism of the higher stratum, because popular literature

can be comprehended by all. Thus the unifying effect of popular literature is to be properly grasped for a correct estimation of the contents and style of folk-literature.

Rhythmic Prose : Unless we study rhythmic prose we shall not be able to comprehend the narrative style of folk-tales. The peculiar sing-song way of narration, full of rhythm, alliterative catches etc. are resorted to by bards and story-tellers all over the world. In India also, the Purāṇikas, Kathakas, the bards and story-tellers, both professional and non-professional, use the same technique. The rhythmic prose style, flavoured with the metre, is called Cūrṇa by the Sanskrit rhetoricians.

The first and the most sublime presentation of rhythmic prose occurs in the Upaniṣad passages like 'Satyam vada, dharmam cara' etc. The Pañcatantra and the Kādambarī also have it in places. The prose of Śankarācārya also lilts with rhythm. The tendency is transferred to the traditional narratives of the bards and reflected in the narration of folk-tales, magical chants etc.

Folk-song : As Krappe has correctly said, a folk-song is a lyric song which originates among the illiterate. Sometimes, a tradition of centuries is behind it. Many a time the popular song is mistaken for a folk-song. The chief characteristic of the folk-song is its anonymity. The popular song has a literary tradition behind it and many popular songs are anonymous and many folk-songs are really speaking popular songs which have lost all traces of the literary tradition. Yet popular songs such as the English national anthem, march-songs, songs on national events etc. can be safely said to be popular songs and never be mixed up with folk-songs. Ballad poetry and much of the bardic treasuries in India can be put in this category.

The Ballads : Both the folk-song and the ballad are traditional forms of songs and it is not easy to distinguish which is which. The main difference between the folk-song and the ballad is that the themes of the folk-song are love and death. It is essentially a lyric. The ballad on the other hand is narrative and its themes are many. The European ballad generally imbibes a tragic love tale. Heroic tales are also incorporated in it. National events find a way into it. What is true of Europe is true of also of the ballads in other parts of the world.

The Indian Ballad : The Gāthās in Vedic literature are the earliest form of ballad poetry in India. The Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa describes three kinds of Gāthās, the Gāthā, Nārāṣamsī and Raibhyā. The Gāthās are said to be the rubbed off from the sacred hymns of the Vedas. They are hence considered impure, and hence a secular song as such has come to be regarded as profane, and unclean. That is why the songster or musician is looked upon as belonging to an inferior class of society. He is supposed to make a living out of the dirt-product and hence to partake of food with him is forbidden. This disdain for the bards is seen from the treatment the bards received in Europe as well. All countries share it to some extent. Of the Gāthās, the Nārāśamsī is devoted to the praise of men, the good deeds done by them, the charities made by them etc. It is the precursor of the traditional Indian ballad. In the Atharvaveda Pārīkśita-gāthās are mentioned. The king Parīkśit seems to be the first known hero of Indian ballad poetry.

Ballads being narrative in character, we find the adoration of lovers of repute from different provinces e.g. Ujalī and Jeṭhawā from Kathiawar, Rūpmatī and Bājbahadur from Malwa, Sadābiraj and Sarangā from Uttar Pradesh etc. An analysis of ballads from Rajputana, Bengal, Sindh, Kutch, Kashmir and Chattisgarh as well as Andhra shows how love forms a major theme of ballad poetry along with the heroic element. In Maharashtra ballads have long ceased to be love-poems or any other narration except that of heroic deeds. The only exception to the rule I find is in the story of the truthful cow Bahulā who goes back to the tiger because she promised so and the tiger spares her life.

Whether the ballad sings of love or of heroism on the battlefield, it is based on the zest for life. The heroic deeds stimulate the idealist side of life, the faith in life and making death only a tool in making life richer than it ever was. In neither of these two varieties are the ascetic feelings upheld.

Popular Literature : As a link between classical or top rank literature and folk-literature popular literature becomes important. Because of it we are able to judge various literary conventions. Rāja-Śekhara in his treatise, Kavamīmānsā, has given a list of some such conventions. e.g. lotuses in rivers and ponds as also birds like swans;

gold and gems in mountains, sandalwood in the Malaya mountain, the separation of the Cakravāka birds at night etc. All the allusions to the Cakarvāka birds have descended from Sanskrit epic and classical poetry. Popular poetry copies it and ultimately it passes on to folk-poetry. All the rural imitations and versions of the stories from the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa also belong to popular literature. Similarly, most of the songs (though they be looked upon as folk-songs) of the deer and the hunter are also handed down to posterity. In classical literature as well as in the supposed folk-literature their tone and diction are of the same quality. These seem to me, popular songs. Seasonal songs also belong essentially to popular poetry.

Some other conventions like the image of the bull impregnating the cow which was an allegory in Vedic poetry for thunder, rain and the fecundity of the earth, was later on taken literally. The thunder-like voice of a sage like Pulastya literally impregnated the daughter of the king Tṛṇabindu whose name was Gou (cow). There is a superstition that women in the Strī-rājya (female kingdom) become pregnant by thunder only. Similarly the simile of the creeper embracing the tree, i.e. the woman embracing a man is present in all the strata of literature and everywhere.

Provincial Conventions : Though many conventions about certain similes have come down from Sanskrit some similes have local conventions behind them. These similes and conventions are so peculiar that they seem to have been long separated from Sanskrit poetic ideology. As for instance the conventions about the Mudhūka or mahua and the plantain trees are very interesting specimens of local characteristics. The Madhūka tree and flower is many a time mentioned by the Sanskrit poets. But rarely is a simile which compares the flower to the face of a young woman found in Sanskrit. Jayadeva of Bengal has used it. It is more a local trait than general. In the Gāthā Saptaśatī a man is likened to the mahua tree. The heroine is shown gathering the flowers on the river bank a place where she has made a date with her lover. Other similes entered in Sanskrit are found in local folk-poetry e.g. In Marathi a beautiful young woman is compared to the betel palm. In Chattisgarh a girl is called a gondali flower, in Kashmir a saffron flower etc.

The convention about the plantain tree in Maharashtra is unique. In Sanskrit the thigh of a beautiful young woman is compared

to the stem of the plantain tree. In Maharashtra and also in Karnataka a woman is compared to the tree itself. In Maharashtra the convention goes further in stating that the plantain tree is a model of a chaste woman who never comes in physical contact with a male and yet conceives. After one birth the tree dies. This convention of immaculate birth is popular in Maharashtra, as the shepherd myths prove.

Of the peculiar provincial traits one is that in Maharashtra the absence of love-songs and tales in popular literature is very striking. It is the saint movement in the province that has probably done away with the love element and supplemented it with the spiritual love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Other provinces in India are rich in folk-songs of love.

Style-Motifs : Some conventions lead to the formation of style-motifs e.g. the word catches like ' the gold winnoing fan adorned with pearls', 'the blue horse' etc. are current for centuries. Certain alliterative catches also are important. The proper names also are significant. Names like Gangā Jamunā, or Yamunā-Jamunā, Umno-Jamno, Buddhi-Siddhi, Sakhoo-Bakoo, etc. are some of the examples. The name and legendary stories of Rāma of Ayodhyā are applied to Paraśurāma also in the Konkan tales. Paraśurāma, also has a brother called Lakṣmaṇa. The name of Śrāvaṇa, has a tragic ring in Marathi folk-literature. Śrāvaṇa, is the name of the ascetic lad who was unwittingly killed by Daśaratha. The tragedy of that boy is transferred to the name in Marathi.

Jamboo is a Sanskrit proper name. But in Marathi folklore it is applied only to the gardener.

Because of the similarity of names legends attached to one person got transferred to another person of the same name. Besides the example of Rama and Paraśurama, the legends of the corn-goddess Sītā have been attached to Sītā, the wife of Rāma Sahadeva is shown to be an astrologer throughout tradition, whether he is the Sahadeo of the Mahābhārata or Sahadeo the half-brother of Bhāḍalī as the Marathi tradition represents.

Number-Motifs : Number-motifs are also important in folklore and in popular tradition. The hero is imprisoned at the house of the villain for twelve years. The snake has five hoods. The giant

has three heads. Some number-motifs have given rise to style-motifs also. As for instance, the number seven is very significant. It had entered the story-world even before the Indo-European civilization as Emil Zieg points out. The body of Vṛtra who was killed by Indra spread on the seven mountains. The Vedic sages extrolled the seven rivers. Seven seas are extant in all the traditions. The hero crosses seven mountains, and passes through seven crests. The housewife seasons the vegetable seven times.

The number five also is equally important. Five kinds of weapons are mentioned in the epics and the Jātakas. Madana, the god of love, uses five flowers as his arrows. Draupadī sees lotuses of five different colours in one pond. The heroine's dress is of five colours. The parrot is five-coloured as well. The calf is tied with a five-coloured rope.

The numbers three, eighteen, nine, twelve and nine lakhs are also important.

A Typical Love-song : In order to study how one song has been transmitted from the local tradition to the classical one and then reverted to the popular tradition I have given the versions of a Gāthā in the Prakrit work Gāthā-Saptasatī (about 100 B.C.—100 A.D.) The heroine is asking the lover where he had spent the night. There are marks of nails on his body, and other symptoms of love sport. The same type of song is found in Jayadevaś Gīta-govinda. Rādhā is the heroine and Kṛṣṇa is the lover. Of the signs of the clandestine love-sport the marks of collirium are found on Kṛṣna's body. This is the only addition Jayadeva has made. Both the songs are examples of the depiction of the Khaṇḍitā Nāyikā or the repulsed heroine as Indian poetics tells. Both the songs are monologues. When we come to popular versions in different provinces the monologue is changed to the dialogue. In Marathi and Kanarese songs, the heroine is blaming the hero who spends the night outside and comes home in the morning. His garments are wet. His back has marks of nails. There is collirium on his face. The hero pleads innocent. He had to search for a lost cow and as he entered the jasmine bower where the cow was, so his clothes got wet and scented etc. The Marathi song is known as Collirium or the Humorous Dialogues of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. There are many versions of it in Marathi. The Kanerese

song is a dialogue between a young, eager wife and her amorous faithless husband. It is also like the rest, a pastoral song but far more natural than any of the above mentioned songs. To me, it seems that the Marathi song is a copy of this song only stamped with the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult. The Gujerati version is the conversation between two girls who are friends. A girl has been out all the night. When she comes back her hair is dishevelled and her bangles are broken, the collirium in her eyes has spread about, her garments are torn. The friend asks her where she had been playing truant at night and the girl puts forward all false excuses, such as on the way to Vṛndāvana she met her parents and she wept, so the collirium spread about. A wild bee attacked her and hence the hair was dishevelled etc. The refrain of the song is like the Kanarese song.

Some Analogies : It is surprising to find some analogous motifs in classical poetry as well as folk-songs, e.g. The famous stanza in the Śākuntala of Kālidāsa which describes the joy of the parents who get dirty on account of taking the child which is covered with dust. In a Santal tale a barren woman asks for a dust-coloured sari. Her husband and parents brought many saries from the market but she approved of none. She longed for the sari which was most dirty by carrying the child that had wallowed in dust. Similarly the heroine pretending her toe being pricked with a thorn, in order to prolong the company of the hero is found in the Śākuntala as well as in a folk-song of the Padhar in Saurashtra.

Some Popular Songs : Some songs are purely popular songs and because of anonymity have been mistaken for folk-songs. As for instance the song of the saint Sakhu in Marathi. From different versions of it, one can see that all those are but variants or corruptions of the originally one song. So also the song of the puberty ceremony, after the first menstruation of a girl after marriage, which symbolises consummation of marriage has many variants in Maharashtra ; the source of it is but one and that too in the Brahmin community. The rest of the communities have only copied it. Many marriage-songs, describing various ceremonies like the applying of turmeric etc. are practically the same all over India. All songs connected with ceremonies especially, marriage, puberty, pregnancy rites etc. are bereft of any poetry. They are prosaic and dull. They

give long lists of the names of various relatives, ornaments, dresses, eatables etc. All these things have a ritualistic importance and hence the ritual suppresses all poetic feelings and emotions. The composition of these songs has seldom any elegance. It is hackneyed and tedious.

Conclusion : There have been references to pastoral songs in the chapter. But unless some basic elements of the pastorals are discussed, the background of the folk-literature in India cannot be grasped. The Westerners have given much thought to the pastoral poets like Chaucer, Milton, Sydney, Spencer have created rich pastoral poetry and there are many renowned pastoral dramas in European literature. Walter Greg in his book "Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama," points out that this sophisticated literature has really nothing to do with the natural life of a shepherd. Nine-tenths of the traditional pastoral literature has no realism about it. It is entirely artificial and melodramatic. The same remark applies to the majority of the Indian pastorals, from an ancient time, which are not yet studied. The pastoral culture has affected Indian culture more than any other occupational culture like hunting or even agriculture. Many trades in our best literature spring originally from the pastorals. The Krishna cult is the best example of it. All over the world the shepherd is fond of the song and the flute. He is an ardent lover and a tender-hearted guardian. In my investigations I have found that the pastorals are the basis of the majority of songs current both in the upper and lower strata of Indian literature. The pastorals join the urban taste to the rural one. The songs of Gaurī have been carried to the aborigines from the Hindu by the Ahirs. Dohās are an entirely Ahir production. The Karmā festival in Chhota Nagpur spread among the aborigines through the Ahirs only. The Dadariyā songs of the aborigines of Chhattisgarh were taken up to the civilised world by them only. The puranic tales are carried by the cowherds from the higher castes to the lower ones.

In Maharashtra the songs and tales of the gods Viṭhobā and Malhārī originally belonged to the Dhangar. Even in Andhra and Telangana the shepherds have their own Purāṇas. The work of joining of the non-Vedic gods and religious tradition to the Vedic tradition was that of the shepherds only. The Divālī tradition and

songs all over India owe much to the cowherd community. Though a majority of the songs of the cowherds and shepherds have been transformed into the songs of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult, yet I have tried to select a few natural pastoral songs from different provinces. Their chief themes are love and the filial emotions the shepherd has for his flock.

Folklore Conference of the National Folk Festival in St. Louis, Missouri, in April, 1953. His address contains many unpalatable truths. In Western countries, there are folklore societies in all big cities and provinces. They have their journals too. Folklore is a recognised subject in the universities. Folklore conferences are also held annually. Yet Prof. Jordan is of the opinion that the folklorist has not yet been able to claim a status as a social or clutural historian. The real task of the folklorist is to ascertain the sociological background of the folk-tales, songs, etc. which he collects. How do they mirror the culture from which they sprang ? They certainly did not originate in a vacuum ; the same question could be asked concerning the ghost stories, the superstitions and local ballads.

" Generally speaking, " continues Prof. Jordan, " biologists agree pretty much as to what bioogy is, sociologists offer a working definition of their discipline, anthropologists have systematised their subject, historians have courted Clio long enough to know her character. But folklorists, it seems to me, are far from agreement on the question of what folklore is. Some say this, some say that. All too frequently bitter controversy arises among the practitioners and teachers of folk-culture. Even a casual examination of folk-anthologies will reveal the amazing diversity of materials that have been brought together under the general classification of folklore, and a reading of reviews by folklorists shows certainly, not only wide diversity of opinion, but also at times, bitterness and rancour that point out how very far apart are the opinions held."[1] Prof. Jordan has spoken the home-truth because he is aware that the study of folklore has the inherent power to feel the vein of popular life correctly, and unless folklorists direct their efforts to bring out the potentialities, the science of folklore will not have a place of honour among the physical sciences but not even among social sciences like history, sociology and anthropology.

1. Southern Folklore Quarterly, 1954.

1

studies of folklore in the western world

I

The Beginning

1. The Teutonic tradition : The collection of Greek legends by poets like Homer is evidently the first mythological collection in Europe. After the fall of the Greek civilisation and extinction of the Greek and Roman religions there was no further development in the cultural traditions of those regions. With the advent of Christianity the ancient cultures receded further into the background. The discovery and the re-introduction of the Morse Sagas in the tenth century gave a new aspect to the old teutonic myths in the surrounding Christian world. Snorri Sturlason first edited the Edda and the Sagas. A sketch has been given of Snorri's life and work.

2. An account of the Danish historian Saxo who wrote on the Teutonic myths.

3. A glimpse of some of the Teutonic legends. The creation legends. Fight between the gods and the demons.

II

Formation of Theories

1. ***Work done in the Seventeenth and the Eighteenth Centuries.***

The influence of Romanticism led scholars to the Celtic, Teutonic and oriental linguistic researches. The study of customs of differ-

13

a negative convention

The chapter deals with the negation of the butterfly-motif in Indian literature, culture (inclusive of Art) and folklore.

The negative convention so faithfully observed by poets and artists for thousand of years speaks much. It throws a good deal of light on the defective depiction of nature in Indian literature. The objective observation of the real living nature, which manifests itself so richly in this country is mostly lacking. The symbolized and conventional nature appeals to the traditional Indian taste rather than a direct experience of it. The idealisation of nature in certain forms also is responsible for this attitude. Various phenomena of nature have been idolised by the ancient Indian. Planets are worshipped. Spirits of trees are invoked. Plants like the Tulsī, Udumbara etc. are considered divinities. Flowers like the lotus are symbols of the most glorious of the divinities. Beasts like the cow and the elephant evoke permanent adoration. Even the insect world shares the reverential feelings. The bee, the white ant, the moth, the ant, etc. are looked upon as blessed creatures. They are auspicious symbols. The conventionality of the description of natural phenomena can be proved from the frequently appearing motifs of the lotus and bee love, of the passion of the moth leading to self-destruction. The motifs are so fixed that they remain unchanged till today.

Though the moth-motif is constantly recurrent in literature, the butterfly is curiously absent throughout. Not only in the Sanskrit literature but also in the Pali and Prakrit as well as in the provincial fiction from the middle ages onwards the negation is just the same. The convention of the omission of the butterfly is seen in folklore as well. The only exceptions are in a couple of examples from Assam and Madhya Pradesh. In Bengal the butterfly is called Prajāpati

and is the symbol of fertility. This convention connects Bengal and Assam, with Burma, Indonesia, Australia, China, Japan and the Mediterranean region. It is definitely a trait of the non-Vedic culture. To me the negation of the butterfly seems to be a cultural ban on the creature. The Bengali word Prajāpati seems to be very significant. The creator, as the Vedic legends tell us was censured because he had incestuous relation with his own daughter. The Purāṇas also ban the worship of Prajāpati or Brahman. If the butterfly symbolized Prajāpati, then it seems probable that the ban on the god also was shifted to the insect and it was banished from culture. In many parts of India it is considered to be an ominous and headless creature. It is said to be visiting cemeteries. Prajāpati's head was cut off by Rudra. His body was sacrificed. Hence the Brahman-cult is associated with death. Hence perhaps, the association of the butterfly with death and destruction.

ent lands also was greatly encouraged. These studies were known as the 'popular antiquities'.

Later the brothers Grimm used the word 'Volks-Kunde' in German and consequently it was translated as folklore by W. J. Thoms in 1846 and has been current ever since.

The Romanticist movement spread to England, France and Germany. Its effect on the study of folklore was tremendous.

2. Even before folklore came to be established as a special branch of study, local sports, ballads, pastimes, old poetry and customs had been printed and had received the attention of literary people. This was a suitable background for the development of the new branch of study, viz. folklore. With the advent of the brothers Grimm in Germany the linguistic aspect of folklore came into prominence. The oriental and especially the Vedic linguistic studies opened up a new vista before the scholars, especially the grammarians and students of religion saw in the Vedas the origin of the European languages as well as classical mythology. For the first time folklore was endowed with an undeniable ideology. This ideology was represented by the brothers Grimm, the pioneers in folklore. It came to be known as the Philological School. This school dealt with the philological and mythological aspects of the old races of mankind, viz. the Aryan, Egyptian, Crete, Celtic, Teutonic, etc. The other exponents of this school were Kuhn, Max Müller, Dassent, Cox etc.

3. *The Brothers Grimm*: A sketch of the life and work of the brothers Grimm. The first to write a German mythology. Jacob Grimm, compiled the famous tales of Reinhard the fox (1834). Wilhelm Grimm's book on German heroic tales is well known.

4. *Max Müller* : A sketch of his life and work. He was the first exponent of comparative philology and comparative mythology. The influence of Benfey, the first European translator of the Pancatantra on Max Müller. His great book is The Science of Mythology. His theory of mythology is that mythology is the pathology of language. He says that mythology is the disease of a language. It originates in misinterpretation. Andrew Lang later attacked Max Müller for this view. Max Müller's another theory was that the

central point of all myths is the sun myths. This view also was attacked by Andrew Lang.

5. *Indianist Theory* : Benfey was the propounder of this theory which says that India was the homeland of all myths and fables. A short sketch of life and work of Theodor Benfey. Other supporters of the theory were Max Müller, Emmanuel Cosquin, Pro. Rhys Davids and Sir George Cox : short sketches of their work.

6. *The Nature-Symbolists* : This school which sought the explanation of myths in nature symbolism was founded by Reich. He follows Max Müller. His theory has been criticised by Lowie, the American anthropologist. He says that it is not that sun-symbolism alone can interpret all myths. Many local myths use symbolism of a local nature as well, and hence myths could be understood only if the local symbolism is taken into account.

7. *Euhmerist School* : This school propounds that a myth comes into being when fantasy mixes up with historical truth. The French scholars Banier and Lampriére are the founders of this school.

8. *Aetiological School* : Dahnhardt, the founder, says that myths are tales with a purpose. They explain the reasons for happenings. Rivers, the eminent English anthropologist, has criticised this theory and later it was modified.

III

The Interlude.

The period of about two decades after the philological school came into prominence is one of interlude and of great happenings. The great figure of this period was Sir James Frazer who was called the Darwin of folklore. This was also the period when the Folklore Society was founded in England (1878). Folk-tales of various countries came to be collected upon.

The definition of folklore and its constituents came to be adjusted. Folklore was accepted as a science of survivals. It contained (1) narratives i.e. folk-tales, heroic tales, ballads and songs and